

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

15055

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

Studies in the Relation of
Art to Life

BY

CARLETON NOYES



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

III

15-5-514
17/8/20

COPYRIGHT 1907 BY CARLETON NOYES

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published April 1907

SECOND IMPRESSION

N
7475

N68

1907

To
MY FATHER
AND THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

“Only themselves understand themselves and the like
of themselves,
As souls only understand souls.”

PREFACE

IN the daily life of the ordinary man, a life crowded with diverse interests and increasingly complex demands, some few moments of a busy week or month or year are accorded to an interest in art. Whatever may be his vocation, the man feels instinctively that in his total scheme of life books, pictures, music have somewhere a place. In his own business or profession he is an expert, a man of special training; and intelligently he does not aspire to a complete understanding of a subject which lies beyond his province. In the same spirit in which he is a master of his own craft, he is content to leave expert knowledge of art to the expert, to the artist and to the connoisseur. For his part as a layman he remains frankly and happily on the outside. But he feels none the less that art has an interest and a meaning even for him. Though he does not practice any art himself, he knows that

PREFACE

he enjoys fine things, a beautiful room, noble buildings, books and plays, statues, pictures, music; and he believes that in his own fashion he is able to appreciate art. I venture to think that he is right.

There is a case for the outsider in reference to art. And I have tried here to state it. This book is an attempt to suggest the possible meaning of art to the ordinary man, to indicate methods of approach to art, and to trace the way of appreciation. It is essentially a personal record, an account of my own adventures with the problem. The book does not pretend to finality; the results are true for me as far as I have gone. They may or may not be true for another. If they become true for another man, he is the one for whom the book was written. I do not apologize because the shelter here put together, in which I have found a certain comfort, is not a palace. Rude as the structure may be, any man is welcomed to it who may find solace there in an hour of need.

C. N.

CAMBRIDGE, *November second, 1906.*

CONTENTS

I. THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION	I
II. THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE	23
III. TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN	44
IV. THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM	87
V. THE BACKGROUND OF ART	105
VI. THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM	137
VII. BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE	165
VIII. THE ARTS OF FORM	201
IX. REPRESENTATION	221
X. THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE	254

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

I

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

TOWARD evening a traveler through a wild country finds himself still in the open, with no hope of reaching a village that night. The wind is growing chill; clouds are gathering in the west, threatening rain. There rises in him a feeling of the need of shelter; and he looks about him to see what material is ready to his hand. Scattered stones will serve for supports and low walls; there are fallen branches for the roof; twigs and leaves can be woven into a thatch. Already the general design has shaped itself in his mind. He sets to work, modifying the details of his plan to suit the resources of his material. At last, after hours of hard thought and eager toil, spurred on by his sense of his great need, the hut is

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ready ; and he takes refuge in it as the storm breaks.

The entire significance of the man's work is *shelter*. The beginning of it lay in his need of shelter. The impulse to action rose out of his consciousness of his need. His imagination conceived the plan whereby the need might be met, and the plan gave shape to his material. The actual result of his labor was a hut, but the hut itself was not the end for which he strove. The hut was but the means. The all-inclusive import of his work — the stimulus which impelled him to act, the purpose for which he toiled, and the end which he accomplished — is shelter.

A man of special sensitiveness to the appeal of color and form finds himself also in the open. He is weary with the way, which shows but broken glimpses of the road. His spirit, heavy with the "burden of the mystery," is torn by conflict and confusion. As he looks across the stony places to the gnarled and weather-tortured trees beyond, and up to the clouds piling black above him, there is revealed to him a sudden harmony

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

among the discords ; an inner principle, apprehended by his imagination, compels the fragments of the seeming chaos into a regnant order. These natural forms become for him the expression external to himself of the struggle of his own spirit and its final resolution. The desire rises in him to express by his own act the order he has newly perceived, the harmony of his spirit with the spirit of nature. As life comes to him dominantly in terms of color and form, it is with color and form that he works to expression so as to satisfy his need. The design is already projected in his imagination, and to realize concretely his ideal he draws upon the material of nature about him. The picture which he paints is not the purpose of his effort. The picture is but the means. His end is to express the great new harmony in which his spirit finds shelter.

Both men, the traveler and the painter, are wayfarers. Both are seeking shelter from stress and storm, and both construct their means. In one case the product is more obviously and immediately practical, and

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

the informing purpose tends to become obscured in the actual serviceableness of the result. The hut answers a need that is primarily physical; the need in the other case is spiritual. But it is a matter of degree. In essence and import the achievement of the two men is the same. The originating impulse, a sense of need; the processes involved, the combination of material elements to a definite end; the result attained, shelter which answers the need,—they are identical. Both men are artists. Both hut and picture are works of art.

So art is not remote from common life after all. In its highest manifestations art is life at its best; painting, sculpture, poetry, music are the distillment and refinement of experience. Architecture and the subsidiary arts of decoration adorn necessity and add delight to use. But whatever the flower and final fruit, art strikes its roots deep down into human need, and draws its impulse and its sustenance from the very sources of life itself. In the wide range from the hut in the wilderness to a Gothic cathedral,

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

from the rude scratches recorded on the cave walls of prehistoric man to the sublimities of the Sistine Chapel, there is no break in the continuity of effort and aspiration. Potentially every man is an artist. Between the artist, so-called, and the ordinary man there is no gulf fixed which cannot be passed. Such are the terms of our mechanical civilization to-day that art has become specialized and the practice of it is limited to a few; in consequence artists have become a kind of class. But essentially the possibilities of art lie within the scope of any man, given the right conditions. So too the separation of the "useful arts" from the "fine arts" is unjust to art and perverse of right appreciation. Whatever the form in which it may manifest itself, from the lowest to the highest, the art spirit is one, and it may quicken in any man who sets mind and heart to the work of his hand. That man is an artist who fashions a new thing that he may express himself in response to his need.

Art is creation. It is the combination of already existing material elements into new

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

forms which become thus the realization of a preconceived idea. Both hut and picture rose in the imagination of their makers before they took shape as things. The material of each was given already in nature ; but the form, as the maker fashioned it, was new. Commonly we think of art as the expression and communication of emotion. A picture, a statue, a symphony we recognize as the symbol of what the artist has felt in some passage of his experience and the means by which he conveys his feeling to us. Art *is* the expression of emotion, but all art springs out of need. The sense of need which impels expression through the medium of creation is itself an emotion. The hut which the traveler built for himself in the wilderness — shaping it according to the design which his imagination suggested, having reference to his need and to the character of his materials — was a work of creation; the need which prompted it presented itself to him as emotion. The picture which the other wayfarer painted of the storm-swept landscape, a harmony which

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

his imagination compelled out of discords, was a work of creation; the emotion which inspired the work was attended by need, the need of expression. The material and practical utility of the hut obscures the emotional character of its origin; the emotional import of the picture outweighs consideration of its utility to the painter as the means by which his need of expression is satisfied. The satisfaction of physical needs which results in the creation of utilities and the satisfaction of spiritual needs which results in the forms of expression we commonly call works of art differ one from the other in their effect on the total man only in degree. All works of use whose conception and making have required an act of creation are art; all art — even in its supreme manifestations — embraces elements of use. The measure in which a work is art is established by the intensity and scope of its maker's emotion and by his power to body forth his feeling in harmonious forms which in turn recreate the emotion in the spirit of those whom his work reaches.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

In its essence and widest compass art is the making of a new thing in response to a sense of need. The very need itself creates, working through man as its agent. This truth is illustrated vividly by the miracles of modern invention. The hand of man unaided was not able to cope with his expanding opportunities; the giant steam and the magician electricity came at his call to work their wonders. The plow and scythe of the New England colonist on his little farm were metamorphosed into the colossal steam-driven shapes, in which machinery seems transmuted into intelligence, as he moved to the conquest of the acres of the West which summoned him to dominion. First the need was felt; the contrivance was created in response. A man of business sees before him in imagination the end to be reached, and applying his ideal to practical conditions, he makes every detail converge to the result desired. All rebellious circumstances, all forces that pull the other way, he bends to his compelling will, and by the shaping power of his genius he accomplishes his aim. His busi-

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

ness is his medium of self-expression ; his success is the realization of his ideal. A painter does no more than this, though he works with a different material. The landscape which is realized ultimately upon his canvas is the landscape seen in his imagination. He draws his colors and forms from nature around; but he selects his details, adapting them to his end. All accidents and incidents are purged away. Out of the apparent confusion of life rises the evident order of art. And in the completed work the artist's *idea* stands forth salient and victorious.

That consciousness of need which compels creation is the origin of art. The owner of a dwelling who first felt the need of securing his door so that he alone might possess the secret and trick of access devised a lock and key, rude enough, as we can fancy. As the maker of the first lock and key he was an artist. All those who followed where he had led, repeating his device without modification, were but artisans. In the measure that any man changed the de-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

sign, however, adapting it more closely to his peculiar needs and so making it anew, to that extent he was an artist also. The man who does a thing for the first time it is done is an artist ; a man who does a thing better is an artist. The painter who copies his object imitatively, finding nothing, creating nothing, is an artisan, however skillful he may be. He is an artist in the degree in which he brings to his subject something of his own, and fashioning it, however crudely, to express the idea he has conceived of the object, so creates.

The difference between work which is art and work which is not art is just this element of the originating impulse and creative act. The difference, though often seemingly slight and not always immediately perceived, is all-important. It distinguishes the artist from the artisan ; a free spirit from a slave ; a thinking, feeling man from a soulless machine. It makes the difference between life rich and significant, and mere existence ; between the mastery of fate and the passive acceptance of things as they are.

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

If a mind and heart are behind it to control and guide it to expression, even the machine may be an instrument in the making of a work of art. It is not the work itself, but the motive which prompted the making of it, that determines its character as art. Art is not the way a thing is done, but the reason why it is done. A chair, though turned on a lathe, may be a work of art, if the maker has truly expressed himself in his work. A picture, though "hand-painted," may be wholly mechanical in spirit. To set about "making a picture" is to begin at the wrong end. The impulse to art flows from within outwards. Art is bound up with life itself; like nature, it is organic and must grow. The form cannot be laid on from the outside; it is born and must develop in response to vital need. In so far as our acts are consciously the expression of ourselves they are prompted by the art spirit.

All our acts are reducible to one of two kinds: either they are acts of creation, effecting a new result, or they are acts of repetition. Acts of repetition tend rapidly to

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

become habits ; and they may be performed without attention or positive volition. Thus, as I am dressing in the morning I may be planning the work for the day ; while my mind is given over to thought, I lose the sense of my material surroundings, my muscles work automatically, the motor-currents flowing through the well-worn grooves, and by force of habit the acts execute themselves. Obviously, acts of repetition, or habits, make up the larger part of our daily lives.

Acts of creation, on the other hand, are performed by an effort of the will in response to the consciousness of a need. To meet the new need we are obliged to make new combinations. I assume that the traveler constructed his hut for the first time, shaping it to the special new conditions ; that the harmony which the painter discerned in the tumult around him he experienced for the first time, and the picture which he paints, shaped with reference to his need and fulfilling it, is a new thing. In the work produced by this act of creation, the feeling which has prompted it finds expression. In the mak-

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

ing of the hut, in the painting of the picture, the impelling need is satisfied.

Although acts of repetition constitute the bulk of life, creation is of its very essence and determines its quality. The significance and joy of life are less in being than in *becoming*. Growth is expression, and in turn expression is made possible by growth. In our conscious experience the sense of becoming is one of our supremesatisfactions. Growth is the purpose and the recompense of our being here, the end for which we strive and the reward of all the effort and the struggle. In the exercise of brain or hand, to feel the work take form, develop, and become something, — that is happiness. And the joy is in the creating rather than in the thing created; the completed work is behind us, and we move forward to new creation. A painter's best picture is the blank canvas before him; an author's greatest book is the one he is just setting himself to write. The desire for change for the sake of change which we all feel at times, a vague restlessness of mind and body, is only the impulse to growth which has not found

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

its direction. Outside of us we love to see the manifestation of growth. We tend and cherish the little plant in the window ; we watch with delight the unfolding of each new leaf and the upward reach into blossom. The spring, bursting triumphant from the silent, winter-stricken earth, is nature's parable of expression, her symbol perennially renewed of the joy of growth.

The impulse to expression is cosmic and eternal. But even in the homeliness and familiarity of our life from day to day the need of expression is there, whether we are entirely aware of it or not ; and we are seeking the realization and fulfillment of ourselves through the utterance of what we are. A few find their expression in forms which with distinct limitation of the term we call works of art. Most men find it in their daily occupations, their profession or their business. The president of one of the great Western railroads remarked once in conversation that he would rather build a thousand miles of railroad than live in the most sumptuous palace on Fifth Avenue. Railroad-

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

building was his medium of expression ; it was his art. Some express themselves in shaping their material environment, in the decoration and ordering of their houses. A young woman said, " My ambition is to keep my house well." Again, for her, housekeeping is her art. Some find the realization of themselves in the friends they draw around them. Love is but the utterance of what we essentially are ; and the response to it in the loved one makes the utterance articulate and complete. Expression rises out of our deepest need, and the need impels expression.

The assertion that art is thus involved with need seems for the moment to run counter to the usual conception, which regards art as a product of leisure, a luxury, and the result not of labor but of play. Art in its higher forms becomes more and more purely the expression of emotion, the untrammelled record of the artist's spiritual experience. It is only when physical necessities have been met or ignored that the spirit of man has free range. But the maker who

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

adds decoration to his bowl after he has moulded it is just as truly fulfilling a need — the need of self-expression — as he fulfilled a need when he fashioned the bowl in the first instance in order that he might slake his thirst. Art is not superadded to life, — something different in kind. All through its ascent from its rudimentary forms to its highest, from hut to cathedral, art is coördinate with the development of life, continuous and without breach or sudden end ; it is the expression step by step of ever fuller and ever deeper experience.

Creation, therefore, follows upon the consciousness of need, whether the need be physical, as with the traveler, or spiritual, as with the painter ; from physical to spiritual we pass by a series of gradations. At their extremes they are easy to distinguish, one from the other ; but along the way there is no break in the continuity. The current formula for art, that art is the utterance of man's joy in his work, is not quite accurate. In the act of creation the maker finds the expression of himself. The man who deco-

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

rates a bowl in response to his own creative impulse is expressing himself. The painter who thrills to the wonder and significance of nature is impelled to expression; and his delight is not fully realized and complete until he has uttered it. Such art is love expressed, and the artist's work is his "hymn of the praise of things." But the joy for both the potter and the painter, the joy which is so bound up with art as to partake of its very essence, is the joy which attends self-expression and the satisfaction of the need.

A work of art is a work of creation brought into being as the expression of emotion. The traveler creates not the wood and stone but shelter, by means of the hut; the painter creates not the landscape but the beauty of it; the musician creates not the musical tones, but by means of a harmony of tones he creates an emotional experience. The impulse to art rises out of the earliest springs of consciousness and vibrates through all life. Art does not disdain to manifest itself in the little acts of expression of simple

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

daily living ; with all its splendid past and vital present it is ever seeking new and greater forms whose end is not yet. I spoke of the work of the traveler through the wilderness as art; the term was applied also to railroad-building and to housekeeping. The truth to be illustrated by these examples is that the primary impulse to artistic expression does not differ in essence from the impulse to creation of any kind. The nature of the thing created, as art, depends upon the emotional value of the result, the degree in which it expresses immediately the emotion of its creator, and the power it possesses to rouse the emotion in others. To show that all art is creation and that all creation tends toward art is not to obscure useful distinctions, but rather to restore art to its rightful place in the life of man.

In the big sense, then, art is bounded only by life itself. It is not a cult ; it is not an activity practiced by the few and a mystery to be understood only by those who are initiated into its secrets. One difficulty in the way of the popular understanding of art is

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

due to the fact that the term art is currently limited to its highest manifestations; we withhold the title of artist from a good carpenter or cabinet-maker who takes a pride in his work and expresses his creative desire by shaping his work to his own idea, and we bestow the name upon any juggler in paint: with the result that many people who are not painters or musicians feel themselves on that account excluded from all appreciation. If we go behind the various manifestations of art to discover just what art is in itself and to determine wherein it is able to link itself with common experience, we find that art is the response to a need. And that need may waken in any man. Every man may be an artist in his degree; and every man in his degree can appreciate art. A work of art is the expression of its maker's experience, the expression in such terms that the experience can be communicated to another. The processes of execution involved in fashioning a work, its technique, may be as incomprehensible and perplexed and difficult as its executants choose to make them. Technique is

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

not the same as art. The only mystery of art is the mystery of all life itself. Accept life with its fundamental mysteries, with its wonders and glories, and we have the clue to art. But we miss the central fact of the whole matter if we do not perceive that art is only a means. It is by expression that we grow and so fulfill ourselves. The work itself which art calls into being is not the end. It fails of its purpose, remaining void and vain, if it does not perform its function. The hut which does not furnish shelter is labor lost. The significance of the painter's effort does not stop with the canvas and pigment which he manipulates into form and meaning. The artist sees beyond the actual material thing which he is fashioning; his purpose in creation is expression. By means of his picture he expresses himself and so finds the satisfaction of his deepest need. The beginning and the end of art is life.

But the artist's work of expression is not ultimately complete until the message is received, and expression becomes communication as his utterance calls out a response in

THE IMPULSE TO EXPRESSION

the spirit of a fellow-man. Art exists not only for the artist's sake but for the appreciator too. As art has its origin in emotion and is the expression of it, so for the appreciator the individual work has a meaning and is art in so far as it becomes for him the expression of what he has himself felt but could not phrase; and it is art too in the measure in which it is the revelation of larger possibilities of feeling and creates in him a new emotional experience. The impulse to expression is common to all; the difference is one of degree. And the message of art is for all, according as they are attuned to the response. Art is creation. For the artist it is creation by expression; for the appreciator it is creation by evocation. These two principles complete the cycle; abstractly and very briefly they are the whole story of art.

To be responsive to the needs of life and its emotional appeal is the first condition of artistic creation. By new combinations of material elements to bring emotion to expression in concrete harmonious forms, themselves charged with emotion and com-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

municating it, is to fashion a work of art. To feel in material, whether in the forms of nature or in works of art, a meaning for the spirit is the condition of appreciation.

II

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

IT is a gray afternoon in late November. The day is gone; evening is not yet come. Though too dark to read or write longer, it is not dark enough for drawn shades and the lamp. As I sit in the gathering dusk, my will hovering between work done and work to do, I surrender to the mood of the moment. The day is accomplished, but it is not yet a remembrance, for it is still too near for me to define the details that made up its hours. Consciousness, not sharp enough for thought, floats away into diffused and obscure emotion. The sense is upon me and around me that I am vaguely, unreasoningly, yet pleasantly, unhappy. Out of the dimness a trick of memory recalls to me the lines, —

“Tears ! tears ! tears !

In the night, in solitude, tears,

On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in
by the sand,

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate,
Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head ;
O who is that ghost ? that form in the dark, with
tears ?

What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there
on the sand ?

Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked
with wild cries ;

O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift
steps along the beach !

O wild and dismal night storm, with wind — O
belching and desperate !

O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm
countenance and regulated pace,

But away at night as you fly, none looking — O
then the unloosen'd ocean

Of tears ! tears ! tears ! ”

Now I know. My mood was the mood
of tears. The poet, too, has felt what I was
feeling. And as a poet he has been able to
bring his emotion to expression. By the
magic of phrase and the mystery of image he
has, out of the moving of his spirit, fashioned
a concrete reality. By means of his expres-
sion, because of it, his emotion becomes real-
ized, and so reaches its fulfillment. And for
me, what before was vague has been made

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

definite. The poet's lines have wakened in me a response; I have felt what he has phrased; and now they become my expression too. As my mood takes form, I become conscious of its meaning. I can distill its significance for the spirit, and in the emotion made definite and realizable as consciousness I feel and know that I am living. Doubly, completely, the poem is a work of art. And my response to it, the absorption of it into my own experience, is appreciation.

I appreciate the poem as I make the experience which the poet has here phrased my own, and at the instant of reading I live out in myself what he has lived and here expressed. I read the words, and intellectually I take in their signification, but the poem is not realized in me until it wakens in me the feeling which the words are framed to convey. The images which an artist employs have the power to rouse emotion in us, so that they come to stand for the emotion itself. We care for nature and it is beautiful to us as its forms become objectively the intimate expression for us of what we feel.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

“O to realize space!

The plenteousness of all, that there are no bounds,
To emerge and be of the sky, of the sun and
moon and flying clouds, as one with them.”

In his contact with the external world the artist identifies himself with his object. If he is painting a tree he in a measure becomes the tree; he values it at all because it expresses for him concretely what he feels in its presence. The object and his spirit fuse; and through the fusion they together grow into a new and larger unity. What his work expresses is not the object for its own sake but this larger unity of his identity with it. To appreciate the artist's work, therefore, we must in our turn merge ourselves in his emotion, and becoming one with it, so extend our personality into larger life.

To make the artist's emotion our own, to identify ourselves with the object which he presents to us, we must pass beyond the material form in which the work is embodied, letting the spirit and meaning of it speak to our spirit. In itself an individual picture or statue or symphony is an objective, material

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

thing, received into consciousness along the channel of the senses ; but its origin and its end alike are in emotion. The material form, whether in nature or in works of art, is only the means by which the emotion is communicated. A landscape in nature is composed of meadow and hills, blue sky and tumbling clouds ; these are the facts of the landscape. But they are not fixed and inert. The imagination of the beholder combines these elements into a harmony of color and mass ; his spirit flows into consonance with the harmony his imagination has compelled out of nature, becoming one with it. To regard the world not as facts and things, but as everywhere the stimulus of feeling, feeling which becomes our own experience, is the condition of appreciation.

To the awakening mind of a child, life is full of wonder, and each unfolding day reveals new marvels of excitement and surprise. As yet untrammelled by any sense of the limitations of material, his quick imagination peoples his world with creatures of his fancy, which to him are more real than the things

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

he is able actually to see and touch. For him the external world is fluid and plastic, to be moulded into forms at will in obedience to his creative desire. In the tiny bundle of rags which mother-love clasps tight to her heart, a little girl sees only the loveliest of babies; and a small boy with his stick of lath and newspaper cap and plume is a mightier than Napoleon. The cruder the toy, the greater is the pleasure in the game; for the imagination delights in the exercise of itself. A wax doll, sent from Paris, with flaxen hair and eyes that open and shut, is laid away, when the mere novelty of it is exhausted, in the attic chest, and the little girl is fondling again her first baby of rag and string. A real steel sword and tin helmet are soon cast aside, and the boy is back again among the toys of his own making. That impulse to creation which all men feel, the impulse which makes the artist, is especially active in a child; his games are his art. With a child material is not an end but a means. Things are for him but the skeleton of life, to be clothed upon by the flesh and blood reality of his own fashioning. His feel-

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

ing is in excess of his knowledge. He has a faculty of perception other than the intellectual. It is imagination.

The child is the first artist. Out of the material around him he creates a world of his own. The prototypes of the forms which he devises exist in life, but it is the thing which he himself makes that interests him, not its original in nature. His play is his expression. He creates; and he is able to merge himself in the thing created. In his play he loses all consciousness of self. He and the toy become one, caught up in the larger unity of the game. According as he identifies himself with the thing outside of him, the child is the first appreciator.

Then comes a change.

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east

Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

Imagination surrenders to the intellect; emotion gives place to knowledge.

Gradually the material world shuts in about us until it becomes for us a hard, inert thing, and no longer a living, changing presence, instinct with infinite possibilities of experience and feeling. Now custom lies upon us

"with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!"

It happens, unfortunately for our enjoyment of life, that we get used to things. Little by little we come to accept them, to take them for granted, and they cease to mean anything to us. Habit, which is our most helpful ally in lending our daily life its practical efficiency, is the foe of emotion and appreciation. Habit allows us to perform without conscious effort the innumerable little acts of each day's necessity which we could not possibly accomplish if every single act required a fresh exercise of will. But just because its action is unconscious and unregarded, habit blunts the

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

edge of our sensibilities. "Thus let but a Rising of the Sun," says Carlyle, "let but a creation of the World happen *twice*, and it ceases to be marvelous, to be noteworthy, or noticeable."

"Except ye become as little children!" Unless the world is new-created every day, unless we can thrill to the beauty of nature with its fair surfaces and harmonies of vibrant sounds, or quicken to the throb of human life with its occupations and its play of energies, its burdens and its joys, unless we find an answer to our needs, and gladness, in sunlight or storms, in the sunset and evening and solitude under the stars, in fields and hills or in thronging city streets, in conflict and struggle or in the face of a friend, unless each new day is a gift and new opportunity, then we cannot interpret the meaning of life nor read the riddle of art. For we cannot truly appreciate art except as we learn to appreciate life. Until then art has no message for us; it is a sealed book, and we shall not open the book nor loose the seals thereof. The meaning of life is for the spirit, and art is its minister. To

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

share in the communion we must become as children. As a child uses the common things of life to his own ends, transfiguring them by force of his creative desire, and fashioning thus a wonderful world of his own by the exercise of his shaping imagination, a world of limitless incident and high adventure, so we must penetrate the visible and tangible actuality around us, the envelope of seemingly inert matter cast in forms of rigid definition, and we must open ourselves to the influence of nature. That influence—nature's power to inspire, quicken, and dilate—flowing through the channel of the senses, plays upon our spirit. The indwelling significance of things is apprehended by the imagination, and is won for us in the measure that we feel.

As we respond to the emotional appeal of the great universe external to ourselves we come to realize that the material world which we see and touch is not final. In the experience of us all there are moments of exaltation and quickened response, moments of illumination when—

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

“with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.”

The “life of things ” is their significance for the spirit. By spirit I mean the sum of our conscious being, that complete entity within us which we recognize as the self. The material world, external, visible, tangible, may be regarded as the actual world. The real world is the world of spiritual forces and relations, apprehended by the imagination and received with feeling. Life, in the sense of our conscious experience of the world, is the moving of the spirit in emotion.

The measure of life for the individual, therefore, is the degree of intensity with which he feels. Experience is not meted out by weeks and months ; it is to be sounded by the depth and poignancy of instant emotion. Variety and multitude of incident may crowd through insentient years and leave no record of their progress along the waste places of their march. Or a day may be a lifetime. In such moments of intensest experience time and space fall away and are not. The outer-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

most bounds of things recede; they vanish altogether: and we are made free of the universe. At such moments we are truly living; then we really *are*.

As the meaning of art is not the material thing which it calls into form, but what the work expresses of life, so in order to appreciate art it is necessary to appreciate life, which is the inspiration of art and its fulfillment. To appreciate life is to send out our being into experience and to *feel*, — to realize in terms of emotion our identity with the great universe outside of us, this world of color and form and sound and movement, this web of illimitable activities and energies, shot through with currents of endlessly varied and modulated feeling. "My son," says the father in Hindu lore, pointing to an animal, a tree, a rock, "my son, thou art that!" The universe is one. Of it we are each an essential part, distinct as individuals, yet fusing with it in our sense of our vital kinship with all other parts and with the whole. I am sauntering through the Public Garden on a fragrant hushed evening in June; touched by the

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

lingering afterglow, the twilight has not yet deepened into night. Grouped about a bench, children are moving softly in the last flicker of play, while the mother nods above them. On the next bench a wanderer is stretched at full length, his face hidden in his crooked-up arm. I note a couple seated, silent, with shoulder touching shoulder. I meet a young man and woman walking hand in hand ; they do not see me as I pass. Beyond, other figures are soundless shadows, gathering out of the enveloping dusk. It is all so intimate and friendly. The air, the flowers, the bit of water through the trees reflecting the lights of the little bridge, are a caress. And it is all for me ! I am a child at his tired play, I am the sleeping tramp, I am the young fellow with his girl. It is not the sentiment of the thing, received intellectually, that makes it mine. My being goes out into these other lives and becomes one with them. I feel them in myself. It is not thought that constitutes appreciation ; it is emotion.

Another glimpse, caught this time through a car window. Now it is a winter twilight.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

The flurry of snow has passed. The earth is penetrated with blue light, suffused by it, merged in it, ever blue. Vague forms, still and shadowy, of hills and trees, soppy with light, are blue within the blue. The brief expanse of bay is deeply luminous and within the pervasive tempering light resolves itself into the cool and solemn reaches of the sky which bends down and touches it. Once more my spirit meets and mingles with the spirit of the landscape. By the harmony of nature's forms and twilight tones I am brought into a larger harmony within myself and with the world around.

All experience offers to us at any moment just such possibilities of living. The infinite and ever-changing expressiveness of nature at every instant of day and night is ours to read if we will but look upon it with the inner vision. The works of men in cities and cultivated fields, if we will see beyond the actual material, may quicken our emotions until we enact in ourselves their story of struggle, of hopes and ambitions partly realized, of defeat or final triumph. The faces seen in a

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

passing crowd bear each the record of life lived, of lives like ours of joys or disappointments, lives of great aims or no aims at all, of unwritten heroisms, of hidden tragedies bravely borne, lives sordid and mean or generous and bright. The panorama of the world unrolls itself *for us*. It is ours to experience and live out in our own being according as we are able to feel. Just as the impulse to expression is common to all men, and all are artists potentially, differing in the depth of their insight into life and in the degree of emotion they have to express, so appreciation lies within the scope of all, and the measure of it to us as individuals is determined by our individual capability of response.

Life means to each one of us what we are able to receive of it in "wise passiveness," and then are able by the constructive force of our individuality to shape into coherence and completeness. As the landscape which an artist paints is the landscape visioned in imagination, though composed of forms given in nature, so life furnishes us the elements of experience, and out of these elements

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

we construct a meaning, each for himself. To one man an object or incident is commonplace and blank; to another it may be charged with significance and big with possibilities of fuller living. "In every object," says Carlyle, "there is inexhaustible meaning; the eye sees in it what it brings means of seeing." To *see* is not merely to receive an image upon the retina. The stimulation of the visual organ becomes sight properly only as the record is conveyed to the consciousness. When I am reading a description of a sunset, there is an image upon my retina of a white page and black marks of different forms grouped in various combinations. But what I see is the sunset. Momentarily to rest the eye upon a landscape is not really to see it, for our mind may be quite elsewhere. We see the landscape only as it becomes part of our conscious experience. The beauty of it is in us. A novelist conceives certain characters and assembles them in action and reaction, but it is we who in effect create the story as we read. We take up a novel, perhaps, which we read five years ago; we find in it

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

now new significances and appeals. The book is the same ; it is we who have changed. We bring to it the added power of feeling of those five years of living. Art works not by information but by evocation. Appreciation is not reception but response. The artist must compel us to feel what he has felt, — not something else. But the scope of his message, with its overtones and subtler implications, is limited by the rate of vibration to which we are attuned.

“ All architecture is what you do to it when you
look upon it,
(Did you think it was in the white or gray stone?
or the lines of the arches and cornices?)
All music is what awakes from you when you are
reminded by the instruments.”

And again Whitman says, “ A great poem is no finish to a man or woman, but rather a beginning.” The final significance of both life and art is not won by the exercise of the intellect, but unfolds itself to us in the measure that we feel.

To illustrate the nature of appreciation and the power from which appreciation de-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

rives, the power to project ourselves into the world external to us, I spoke of the joy of living peculiar to the child and to the child-like in heart. But that is not quite the whole of the story. A child by force of his imagination and capacity of feeling is able to pass beyond the limits of material, and he lives in a world of exhaustless play and happiness; for him objects are but means and not an end. To transcend thus the bounds of matter imposed by the senses and to live by the power of emotion is the first condition of appreciation. The second condition of appreciation is to feel and know it, to become conscious of ourselves in our relation to the object. To *live* is the purpose of life; to be aware that we are living is its fulfillment and the reward of appreciation.

Experience has a double value. There is the instant of experience itself, and then the reaction on it. A child is unconscious in his play; he is able to forget himself in it completely. At that moment he is most happy. The instant of supreme joy is the instant of ecstasy, when we lose all consciousness of

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

ourselves as separate and distinct individualities. We are one with the whole. But experience does not yield us its fullest and permanent significance until, having abandoned ourselves to the moment, we then react upon it and become aware of what the moment means. A group of children are at play. Without thought of themselves they are projected into their sport; with their whole being merged in it, they are intensely living. A passer on the street stands and watches them. For the moment, in spirit he becomes a child with them. In himself he feels the absorption and vivid reality to them of what they are doing. But he feels also what they do not feel, and that is, what it means to be a child. Where they are unconscious he is conscious; and therefore he is able, as they are not, to distill the significance of their play. This recognition makes possible the extension of his own life; for the man adds to himself the child. The reproach is sometimes brought against Walt Whitman that the very people he writes about do not read him. The explanation is

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

simple and illustrates the difference between the unconscious and the conscious reception of life. The "average man" who is the hero of Whitman's chants is not aware of himself as such. He goes about his business, content to do his work; and that makes up his experience. It is not the average man himself, but the poet standing outside and looking on with imaginative sympathy, who feels what it means to be an average man. It is the poet who must "teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade." It is not enough to be happy as children are happy,—unconsciously. We must be happy and know it too.

The attitude of appreciation is the attitude of response,—the projection of ourselves into new and fuller ranges of feeling, with the resultant extension of our personality and a larger grasp on life. We do not need to go far afield for experience; it is here and now. To-day is the only day, and every day is the best day. "The readiness is all." But mere contact with the surface of life is not enough. Living does not con-

THE ATTITUDE OF RESPONSE

sist in barely meeting the necessities of our material existence ; to live is to feel vibrantly throughout our being the inner significance of things, their appeal and welcome to the spirit. This fair world of color and form and texture is but a show world, after all, — this world which looms so near that we can see it, touch it, which comes to us out of the abysses of time and recedes into infinitudes of space whither the imagination cannot follow it. The true and vital meaning of it resides within and discovers itself to us finally as emotion. Some of this meaning art reveals to us, and in that measure it helps us to find ourselves. But art is only the means. The starting-point of the appreciation of art, and its goal, is the appreciation of life. The reward of living is the added ability to live. And life yields its fullest opportunities, its deepest tragedies, its highest joys, all its infinite scope of feeling, to those who enter by the gate of appreciation.

III

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

A PEASANT is striding across a field in the twilight shadow of a hill. Beyond, where the fold of the hill dips down into the field, another peasant is driving a team of oxen at a plow. The distant figures are aglow with golden mellow light, the last light of day, which deepens the gloom of the shadowing hillside. The sower's cap is pulled tight about his head, hiding under its shade the unseeing eyes. The mouth is brutal and grim. The heavy jaw flows down into the thick, resistive neck. The right arm swings powerfully out, scattering the grain. The left is pressed to his body; the big, stubborn hand clutches close the pouch of seed. Action heroic, elemental; the dumb bearing of the universal burden. In the flex of the shoulder, the crook of the outstretched arm, the conquering onward stride, is expressed

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

all the force of that word of the Lord to the first toiler, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Three men are standing before Millet's canvas.

One recognizes the subject of the picture. With the pleasure of recognition he notes what the artist has here represented, and he is interested in the situation. This is a peasant, and he is sowing his grain. So the on-looker stands and watches the peasant in his movement, and he *thinks* about the sower, recalling any sower he may have read of or seen or known, his own sower rather than the one that Millet has seen and would show to him. This man's pleasure in the picture has its place.

The second of the three men is attracted by the qualities of execution which the work displays, and he is delighted by what he calls the "actual beauty" of the painting. With eyes close to the canvas he notes the way Millet has handled his materials, his drawing, his color, his surfaces and edges, all the knack of the brush-work, recognizing in

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

his examination of the workmanship of the picture that though Millet was a very great artist, he was not a great painter, that the reach of his ideas was not equaled by his technical skill. Then as the beholder stands back from the canvas to take in the ensemble, his eye is pleased by the color-harmony, it rests lovingly upon the balance of the composition, and follows with satisfaction the rhythmic flow of line. His enjoyment is both intellectual and sensuous. And that too has its place.

The third spectator, with no thought of the facts around which the picture is built, not observing the technical execution as such, unconscious at the moment also of its merely sensuous charm, feels within himself, "*I am that peasant!*" In his own spirit is enacted the agelong world-drama of toil. He sees beyond the bare subject of the picture; the medium with all its power of sensuous appeal and satisfaction becomes transparent. The beholder enters into the very being of the laborer; and as he identifies himself with this other life outside of him, becom-

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

ing one with it in spirit and feeling, he adds just so much to his own experience. In his reception of the meaning of Millet's painting of the "Sower" he lives more deeply and abundantly.

It is the last of these three men who stands in the attitude of full and true appreciation. The first of the three uses the picture simply as a point of departure; his thought travels away from the canvas, and he builds up the entire experience out of his own knowledge and store of associations. The second man comes a little nearer to appreciation, but even he falls short of full realization, for he stops at the actual material work itself. His interest in the technical execution and his pleasure in the sensuous qualities of the medium do not carry him through the canvas and into the emotion which it was the artist's purpose to convey. Only he truly appreciates the painting of the "Sower" who feels something of what Millet felt, partaking of the artist's experience as expressed by means of the picture, and making it vitally his own.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

But before the appreciator can have brought himself to the point of perception where he is able to respond directly to the significance of art and to make the artist's emotion a part of his own emotional experience, he must needs have traveled a long and rather devious way. Appreciation is not limited to the exercise of the intellect, as in the recognition of the subject of a work of art and in the interest which the technically minded spectator takes in the artist's skill. It does not end with the gratification of the senses, as with the delight in harmonious color and rhythmic line and ordered mass. Yet the intellect and the senses, though they are finally but the channel through which the artist's meaning flows to reach and rouse the feelings, nevertheless play their part in appreciation. Between the spirit of the artist and the spirit of the appreciator stands the individual work of art as the means of expression and communication. In the work itself emotion is embodied in material form. The material which art employs for expression constitutes its language. Certain principles

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

govern the composition of the work, certain processes are involved in the making of it, and the result possesses certain qualities and powers. The processes which enter into the actual fashioning of the work are both intellectual and physical, requiring the exercise of the artist's mind in the planning of the work and in the directing of his hand ; so far as the appreciator concerns himself with them, they address themselves to his intellect. The finished work in its material aspect possesses qualities which are perceived by the senses and which have a power of sensuous delight. Upon these processes and these qualities depends in part the total character of a work of art, and they must be reckoned with in appreciation.

In his approach to any work of art, therefore, the layman is confronted first of all with the problem of the language which the work employs. Architecture uses as its language the structural capabilities of its material, as wood or stone, bringing all together into coherent and serviceable form. Poetry is phrased in words. Painting employs as its medium

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

color and line and mass. At the outset, in the case of any art, we have some knowledge of the signification of its terms. Here is a painting of a sower. Out of previous experience of the world we easily recognize the subject of the picture. But whence comes the majesty of this rude peasant, the dignity august of this rough and toil-burdened laborer, his power to move us? In addition to the common signification of its terms, then, language seems to have a further expressiveness, a new meaning imparted to it by the way in which the artist uses it. In a poem we know the meaning of the words, but the *poetry* of it, which we feel rather than know, is the creation of the poet, wrought out of the familiar words by his cunning manipulation of them.

“The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

“Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!"

A drama in twelve lines. These are words of common daily usage, every one, — for the most part aggressively so. But the romance which they effuse, the glamour which envelops the commonplace incident as with an aura, is due to the poet's strategic selection of his terms, the one right word out of many words that offered, and his subtle combination of his terms into melody and rhythm. The wonder of the poet's craft is like the musician's, —

"That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star."

A building rises before us; we recognize it as a building, and again easily we infer the purpose which it serves, that it is a temple or a dwelling. And then the beauty of it, a power to affect us beyond the mere fact that it is a building, lays hold upon us, an influence emanating from it which we do not altogether explain to ourselves. Simply in

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

its presence we feel that we are pleased. The fact, the material which the artist uses, exists out there in nature. But the beauty of the building, the majesty and power of the picture, the charm of the poem, — this is the *art* of the artist; and he wins his effects by the way in which he handles his materials, by his *technique*. Some knowledge of technique, therefore, — not the artist's knowledge of it, but the ability to read the language of art as the artist intends it to be read, — is necessary to appreciation.

The hut which the traveler through a wild country put together to provide himself shelter against storm and the night was in essence a work of art. The purpose of his effort was not the hut itself but shelter, to accomplish which he used the hut as his means. The emotion of which the work was the expression, in this case the traveler's consciousness of his need, embodied itself in a concrete form and made use of material. The hut which he conceived in response to his need became for him the subject or motive of his work. For the actual expression of his de-

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

sign he took advantage of the qualities of his material, its capabilities to combine thus and so ; these inherent qualities were his medium. The material wood and stone which he employed were the vehicle of his design. The way in which he handled his vehicle toward the construction of the hut, availing himself of the qualities and capabilities of his material, might be called his technique.

The sight of some landscape wakens in the beholder a vivid and definite emotion ; he is moved by it to some form of expression. If he is a painter he will express his emotion by means of a picture, which involves in the making of it certain elements and certain processes. The picture will present selected facts in the landscape ; the landscape, then, as constructed according to the design the painter has conceived of it, becomes the motive or subject of his picture. The particular aspects of the landscape which the picture records are its color and its form. These qualities of color and form are the painter's medium. An etching of the scene would use not color but line to express the artist's emo-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION.

tion in its presence; so line is the medium of etching. But "qualities" of objects are an abstraction unless they are embodied in material. In order, therefore, to give his medium actual embodiment the painter uses pigment, as oil-color or water-color or tempera, laid upon a surface, as canvas, wood, paper, plaster; this material pigment is his vehicle. The etcher employs inked scratches upon his plate of zinc or copper, bitten by acid or scratched directly by the needle; these marks of ink are the vehicle of etching. To the way in which the artist uses his medium for practical expression and to his methods in the actual handling of his vehicle is applied the term technique. The general conception of his picture, its total design, the choice of motive, the selection of details, the main scheme of composition, — these belong to the great strategy of his art. The application of these principles in practice and their material working out upon his canvas are an affair of tactics and fall within the province of technique.

The ultimate significance of a work of art

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

is its content of emotion, the essential controlling idea, which inspires the work and gives it concrete form. In its actual embodiment, the expressive power of the work resides in the medium. The medium of any art, then, as color and mass in painting, line in drawing and etching, form in sculpture, sound in music, is its means of expression and constitutes its language. Now the signification of language derives from convention. Line, for example, which may be so sensitive and so expressive, is only an abstraction and does not exist in nature. What the draughtsman renders as line is objectively in fact the boundary of forms. A head, with all its subtleties of color and light and shade, may be represented by a pencil or charcoal drawing, black upon a white surface. It is not the head which is black and white, but the drawing. Our acceptance of the drawing as an adequate representation of the head rests upon convention. Writing is an elementary kind of drawing; the letters of the alphabet were originally pictures or symbols. So to-day written or printed letters are arbitrary

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

symbols of sounds, and grouped together in arbitrary combinations they form words, which are symbols of ideas. The word *sum* stood to the old Romans for the idea "I am;" to English-speaking people the word signifies a "total" and also a problem in arithmetic. A painting of a landscape does not attempt to imitate the scene; it uses colors and forms as symbols which serve for expression. The meaning attaching to these symbols derives from common acceptance and usage. Japanese painting, rendering the abstract spirit of movement of a wave, for example, rather than the concrete details of its surface appearance, differs fundamentally from the painting of the western world; it is none the less pregnant with meaning for those who know the convention. To understand language, therefore, we must understand the convention and accept its terms. The value of language as a means of expression and communication depends upon the knowledge, common to the user and to the person addressed, of the signification of its terms. Its effectiveness is determined by the

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

way in which it is employed, involving the choice of terms, as the true line for the false or meaningless one, the right value or note of color out of many that would almost do, the exact and specific word rather than the vague and feeble; involving also the combination of terms into articulate forms. These ways and methods in the use of language are the concern of technique. Technique, therefore, plays an important part in the creation and the ultimate fortunes of the artist's work.

Just here arises a problem for the layman in his approach to art. The man who says, "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like," is a familiar figure in our midst; of such, for the most part, the "public" of art is constituted. What he really means is, "I don't know anything about technique, but art interests me. I read books, I go to concerts and the theatre, I look at pictures; and in a way they have something for me." If we make this distinction between art and technique, the matter becomes simplified. The layman does not himself paint pictures or write books or compose music; his contact

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

with art is with the purpose of appreciation. Life holds some meaning for him, as he is engaged in living, and there his chief interest lies. So art too has a message addressed to him, for art starts with life and in the end comes back to it. If art is not the expression of vital feeling, in its turn communicating the feeling to the appreciator so that he makes it a real part of his experience of life, then the thing called art is only an exercise in dexterity for the maker and a pastime for the receiver; it is not art. But art is not quite the same as life at first hand; it is rather the distillment of it. In order to render the significance of life as he has perceived and felt it, the artist selects and modifies his facts; and his work depends for its expressiveness upon the material form in which the emotion is embodied. The handling of material to the end of making it expressive is an affair of technique. The layman may ask himself, then, To what extent is a knowledge of technique necessary for appreciation? And how may he win that knowledge?

On his road to appreciation the layman is

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

beset with difficulties. Most of the talk about art which he hears is either the translation of picture or sonata into terms of literary sentiment or it is a discussion of the way the thing is done. He knows at least that painting is not the same as literature and that music has its own province; he recognizes that the meaning of pictures is not literary but pictorial, the meaning of music is musical. But the emphasis laid upon the manner of execution confuses and disturbs him. At the outset he frankly admits that he has no knowledge of technical processes as such. Yet each art must be read in its own language, and each has its special technical problems. He realizes that to master the technique of any single art is a career. And yet there are many arts, all of which may have some message for him in their own kind. If he must be able to paint in order to enjoy pictures rightly, if he cannot listen intelligently at a concert without being able himself to compose or at least to perform, his case for the appreciation of art seems hopeless.

If the layman turns to his artist friends for

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

enlightenment and a little sympathy, it is possible he may encounter a rebuff. Artists sometimes speak contemptuously of the public. "A painter," they say, "paints for painters, not for the people; outsiders know nothing about painting." True, outsiders know nothing about painting, but perhaps they know a little about life. If art is more than intellectual subtlety and manual skill, if art is the expression of something the artist has felt and lived, then the outsider has after all some standard for his estimate of art and a basis for his enjoyment. He is able to determine the value of the work to himself according as it expresses what he already knows about life or reveals to him fuller possibilities of experience which he can make his own. He does not pretend to judge painting; but he feels that he has some right to appreciate art. In reducing all art to a matter of technique artists themselves are not quite consistent. My friends Jones, a painter, and Smith, a composer, do not withhold their opinion of this or that novel and poem and play, and they discourse easily on the performances of Mr.

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

James and Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Shaw; but I have no right to talk about the meaning to me of Jones's picture or Smith's sonata, for my business is with words, and therefore I cannot have any concern with painting or with music. To be sure, literature uses as its vehicle the means of communication of daily life, namely, words. But the *art* in literature, the interpretation of life which it gives us, as distinct from mere entertainment, is no more generally appreciated than the art in painting. A man's technical accomplishment may be best understood and valued by his fellow-workmen in the same craft; and often the estimate set by artists on their own work is referred to the qualities of its technical execution. As a classic instance, Raphael sent some of his drawings to Albert Dürer to "show him his hand." So a painter paints for the painters. But the artist gives back a new fullness and meaning to life and addresses all who live. That man is fortunate who does not allow his progress toward appreciation to be impeded by this confusion of technique with art.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

The emphasis which workers in any art place upon their powers of execution is for themselves a false valuation of technique, and it tends to obscure the layman's vision of essentials. Technique is not, as it would seem, the whole of art, but only a necessary part. A work of art in its creation involves two elements, — the idea and the execution. The idea is the emotional content of the work ; the execution is the practical expressing of the idea by means of the medium and the vehicle. The idea of Millet's " Sower " is the emotion attending his conception of the laborer rendered in visual terms ; the execution of the picture is exhibited in the composition, the color, the drawing, and the actual brush-work. So, too, the artist himself is constituted by two qualifications, which must exist together: first, the power of the subject over the artist ; and second, the artist's power over his subject. The first of these without the second results simply in emotion which does not come to expression as art. The second without the first produces sham art ; the semblance of art may be fashioned

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

by technical skill, but the life which inspires art is wanting. The artist, then, may be regarded in a dual aspect. He is first a temperament and a mind, capable of feeling intensely and able to integrate his emotions into unified coherent form; in this aspect he is essentially the *artist*. Secondly, for the expression of his idea he brings to bear on the execution of his work his command of the medium, his intellectual adroitness and his manual skill; in this aspect he is the *technician*. Every artist has a special kind of means with which he works, requiring knowledge and dexterity; but it may be assumed that in addition to his ability to express himself he has something to say. We may test a man's merit as a painter by his ability to paint. As an artist his greatness is to be judged with reference to the greatness of his ideas; and in his capacity as artist his technical skill derives its value from the measure in which it is adequate to their expression. In the case of an accomplished pianist or violinist we take his proficiency of technique for granted, and we ask, What, with all this power of expres-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

sion at his command, has he to say? In his rendering of the composer's work what has he of his own to contribute by way of interpretation? Conceding at once to Mr. Sargent his supreme competence as a painter, his consummate mastery of all his means, we ask, What has he seen in this man or this woman before him worthy of the exercise of such skill? In terms of the personality he is interpreting, what has he to tell us of the beauty and scope of life and to communicate to us of larger emotional experience? The worth of technique is determined, not by its excellence as such, but by its efficiency for expression.

It is difficult for an outsider to understand why painters, writers, sculptors, and the rest, who are called artists in distinction from the ordinary workman, should make so much of their skill. Any man who works freely and with joy takes pride in his performance. And instinctively we have a great respect for a good workman. Skill is not confined to those who are engaged in what is conventionally regarded as art. Indeed, the distinction im-

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

plied in favor of "art" is unjust to the wide range of activities of familiar daily life into which the true art spirit may enter. A boot-black who polishes his shoes as well as he can, not merely because he is to be paid for it, though too he has a right to his pay, but because that is his work, his means of expression, even he works in the spirit of an artist. Extraordinary skill is often developed by those who are quite outside the pale of art. In a circus or music-hall entertainment we may see a man throw himself from a trapeze swinging high in air, and after executing a double somersault varied by complex lateral gyrations, catch the extended arms of his partner, who is hanging by his knees on another flying bar. Or a man leaning backwards over a chair shoots at a distance of fifty paces a lump of sugar from between the foreheads of two devoted assistants. Such skill presupposes intelligence. Of the years of training and practice, of the sacrifice and the power of will, that have gone to the accomplishment of this result, the looker-on can form but little conception. These men are not considered

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

artists. Yet a painter who uses his picture to exhibit a skill no more wonderful than theirs would be grieved to be accounted an acrobat or a juggler. Only such skill as is employed in the service of expression is to be reckoned with as an element in art; and in art it is of value not for its own sake but as it serves its purpose. The true artist subordinates his technique to expression, justly making it a means and not the end. He cares for the significance of his idea more than for his sleight of hand; he effaces his skill for his art.

A recognition of the skill exhibited in the fashioning of a work of art, however, if seen in its right relation to the total scope of the work, is a legitimate source of pleasure. Knowledge of any subject brings its satisfactions. To understand with discerning insight the workings of any process, whether it be the operation of natural laws, as in astronomy or chemistry, whether it be the construction of a locomotive, the playing of a game of foot-ball, or the painting of a picture, to see the "wheels go round" and know the how and the wherefore,—undeni-

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

ably this is a source of pleasure. In the understanding of technical processes, too, there is a further occasion of enjoyment, differing somewhat from the satisfaction which follows in the train of knowledge.

“There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know,”

says the poet Cowper. There is a pleasure in the sense of difficulties overcome known only to those who have tried to overcome them. But such enjoyment — the pleasure which comes with enlightened recognition and the pleasure of mastery and triumph — derives from an intellectual exercise and is not to be confounded with the full appreciation of art. Art, finally, is not the “how” but the “what” in terms of its emotional significance. Our pleasure in the result, in the design itself, is not the same as our pleasure in the skill that produced the work. The design, with the message that it carries, not the making of it, is the end of art.

Too great preoccupation with technique conflicts with full appreciation. To fix the attention upon the manner of expression is

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

to lose the meaning. A style which attracts notice to itself is in so far forth bad style, because it defeats its own end, which is expression ; but beyond this, our interest in technical execution is purely intellectual, whereas art reaches the emotions. At the theatre a critic sits unmoved ; dispassionately he looks upon the personages of the drama, as they advance, retreat, and countermarch, little by little yielding up their secret, disclosing all the subtle interplay of human motives. From the heights of his knowledge the critic surveys the spectacle ; with an insight born of his learning, he penetrates the mysteries of the playwright's craft. He knows what thought and skill have gone into this result ; he knows the weary hours of toil, the difficulties of invention and selection, the heroic rejections, the intricacies of construction, the final triumph. He sees it all from the point of view of the master-workman, and sympathetically he applauds his success ; his recognition of what has been accomplished is his pleasure. But all the while he has remained on the outside. Not for a moment has he

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

become a party to the play. He brings to it nothing of his own feeling and power of response. There has been no union of his spirit with the artist's spirit, — that union in which a work of art achieves its consummation. The man at his side, with no knowledge or thought of how the effect has been won, surrenders himself to the illusion. These people on the stage are more intensely and vividly real to him than in life itself; the artist has distilled the significance of the situation and communicates it to him as emotion. The man's reaction is not limited to the exercise of his intellect, — he gives himself. In the experience which the dramatist conveys to him beautifully, shaping discords into harmony and disclosing their meaning for the spirit, he lives.

A true artist employs his medium as an instrument of expression; and he values his own technical skill in the handling of it according to the measure that he is enabled thereby to express himself more effectively. On the layman's part so much knowledge of technique is necessary as makes it possible

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

for him to understand the artist's language and the added expressiveness wrought out of language by the artist's cunning use of it. And such knowledge is not beyond his reach.

In order to understand the meaning of any language we must first understand the signification of its terms, and then we must know something of the ways in which they may be combined into articulate forms of expression. The terms of speech are words; in order to speak coherently and articulately we must group words into sentences according to the laws of the tongue to which they belong. Similarly, every art has its terms, or "parts of speech," and its grammar, or the ways in which the terms are combined. The terms of painting are color and form, the terms of music are tones. Colors and forms are brought together into harmony and balance that by their juxtaposition they may be made expressive and beautiful. Tones are woven into a pattern according to principles of harmony, melody, and rhythm, and they become music. When technique is turned to such uses, not for the vainglory of a virtuoso, but

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

for the service of the artist in his earnest work of expression, then it identifies itself with art.

A knowledge of the signification of the terms of art the layman may win for himself by a recognition of the expressive power of all material and by sensitiveness to it. The beholder will not respond to the appeal of a painting of a landscape unless he has himself felt something of the charm or glory of landscape in nature; he will not quicken and expand to the dignity or force caught in rigid marble triumphantly made fluent in statue or relief until he has realized for himself the significance of form and movement which exhales from every natural object. Gesture is a universal language. The mighty burden of meaning in Millet's picture of the "Sower" is carried by the gesture of the laborer as he swings across the background of field and hill, whose forms also are expressive; here, too, the elemental dignity of form and movement is reinforced by the solemnity of the color. Gesture is but one of nature's characters wherewith she inscribes upon the vivid, shift-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ing surface of the world her message to the spirit of man. A clue to the understanding of the terms of art, therefore, is found in the layman's own appreciation of the emotional value of all objects of sense and their multitudinous power of utterance,—the sensitive decision of line, the might or delicacy of form, the splendor and subtlety of color, the magic of sound, the satisfying virtue of harmony in whatever embodiment, all the beauty of nature, all the significance of human life. And this appreciation is to be won largely by the very experience of it. The more we feel, the greater becomes our power for deeper feeling. Every emotion to which we thrill is the entrance into larger capacity of emotion. We may allow for growth and trust to the inevitable working of its laws. In the appreciation of both life and art the individual may be his own teacher by experience.

The qualities of objects with their inherent emotional values constitute the raw material of art, to be woven by the artist into a fabric of expressive form and texture. Equipped

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

with a knowledge of the terms of any art, the layman has yet to understand something of the ways in which the terms may be combined. Every artist has his idiom or characteristic style. Rembrandt on the flat surface of his canvas secures the illusion of form in the round by a system of light and shade; modeling is indicated by painting the parts in greater relief in light and the parts in less relief in shadow. Manet renders the relief of form by a system of "values," or planes of more and less light. The local color of objects is affected by the amount of light they receive and the distance an object or part of an object is from the eye of the spectator. Manet paints with degrees of light, and he wins his effects, not by contrasts of color, but by subtle modulations within a given hue. Landscape painters before the middle of the nineteenth century, working with color in masses, secured a total harmony by bringing all their colors, mixed upon the palette, into the same key. The "Luminarists," like Claude Monet, work with little spots or points of color laid separately upon the canvas;

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

the fusion of these separate points into the dominant tone is made by the eye of the beholder. The characteristic effect of a work of art is determined by the way in which the means are employed. Some knowledge, therefore, of the artist's aims as indicated in his method of working is necessary to a full understanding of what he wants to say.

In his effort to understand for his own purposes of appreciation what the artist has accomplished by his technique, the layman may first of all distinguish between processes and results. A landscape in nature is beautiful to the beholder because he perceives in it some harmony of color and form which through the eye appeals to the emotions. His vision does not transmit every fact in the landscape; instinctively his eye in its sweep over meadow and trees and hill selects those details that compose. By this act of *integration* he is for himself in so far forth an artist. If he were a painter he would know what elements in the landscape to put upon his canvas. But he has no skill in the actual practice of drawing and of handling the brush, no knowledge

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

of mixing colors and matching tones; he understands nothing of perspective and "values" and the relations of light and shade. He knows only what he sees, that the landscape as he sees it is beautiful; and equally he recognizes as beautiful the presentment of it upon canvas. He is ignorant of the technical problems with which the painter in practice has had to contend in order to reach this result; it is the result only that is of concern to him in so far as it is or is not what he desires. The painter's color is significant to him, not because he knows how to mix the color for himself, but because that color in nature has spoken to him unutterable things and he has responded to it. The layman cannot make a sunset and he cannot paint a picture; but he can enjoy both. So he cares, then, rather for what the painter has done than for how he has done it, because the processes do not enter into his own experience. The picture has a meaning for him in the measure that it expresses what he perceives and feels, and that is the beauty of the landscape.

Any knowledge of technical processes

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

which the layman may happen to possess may be a source of intellectual pleasure. But for appreciation, only so much understanding of technique is necessary as enables him to receive the message of a given work in the degree of expressiveness which the artist by his use of his medium has attained. A clue to this understanding may come to him by intuition, by virtue of his own native insight and intelligence. He may gain it by reading or by instruction. He may go out and win it by intrepid questioning of those who know ; and it is to be hoped that such will be very patient with him, for after all even a layman has the right to live. Once started on the path, then, in the mysteries of art as in the whole complex infinite business of living, he becomes his own tutor by observation and experience ; and he may develop into a fuller knowledge in obedience to the law of growth. Each partial clue to understanding brings him a step farther on his road ; each new glimmer of insight beckons him to ultimate illumination. Though baffled at the outset, yet patient under disappointment, undauntedly he pushes

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

on in spite of obstacles, until he wins his way at last to true appreciation.

If the layman seeks a standard by which to test the value of any technical method, he finds it in the success of the work itself. Every method is to be judged in and for itself on its own merits, and not as better or worse than some other method. Individually we may prefer Velasquez to Frans Hals; Whistler may minister to our personal satisfaction in larger measure than Mr. Sargent; we may enjoy Mr. James better than Stevenson; Richard Strauss may stir us more deeply than Brahms. We do not affirm thereby that impressionism is inherently better than realism, or that subtlety is more to be desired than strength; the psychological novel is not necessarily greater than romance; because of our preference "programme music" is not therefore more significant than "absolute music." The greatness of an artist is established by the greatness of his ideas, adequately expressed. And the value of any technical method is determined by its own effectiveness for expression.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

There is, then, no invariable standard external to the work itself by which to judge technique. For no art is final. A single work is the manifestation of beauty as the individual artist has conceived or felt it. The perception of what is beautiful varies from age to age and with each person. So, too, standards of beauty in art change with each generation ; commonly they are deduced from the practice of preceding artists. Classicism formulates rules from works that have come to be recognized as beautiful, and it requires of the artist conformity to these rules. By this standard, which it regards as absolute, it tries a new work, and it pretends to adjudge the work good or bad according as it meets the requirements. Then a Titan emerges who defies the canons, wrecks the old order, and in his own way, to the despair or scorn of his contemporaries, creates a work which the generation that follows comes to see is beautiful. "Every author," says Wordsworth, "as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed." Wordsworth

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

in his own generation was ridiculed ; Millet, when he ceased painting nudes for art-dealers' windows and ventured to express himself, faced starvation. Every artist is in some measure an innovator ; for his own age he is a romanticist. But the romanticist of one age becomes a classic for the next ; and his performance in its turn gives laws to his successors. Richard Strauss, deriving in some sense from Wagner, makes the older man seem a classic and conservative. Then a new mind again is raised up, a new temperament, with new needs ; and these shape their own adequate new expression. "The cleanest expression," says Whitman, "is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself and makes one." As all life is growth, as there are no bounds to the possibilities of human experience, so the workings of the art-impulse cannot be compressed within the terms of a hard and narrow definition, and any abstract formula for beauty is in the very nature of things doomed to failure. No limit can be set to the forms in which beauty may be made manifest.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

“The true poets are not followers of beauty, but the august masters of beauty.” And Whitman’s own verse is a notable example of a new technique forged in response to a new need of expression. Dealing as he did with the big basic impulses of common experience accessible to all men, Whitman needed a largeness and freedom of expression which he did not find in the accepted and current poetic forms. To match the limitlessly diversified character of the people, occupations, and aspirations of “these States,” as yet undeveloped but vital and inclosing the seed of unguessed-at possibilities, to tally the fluid, indeterminate, outward-reaching spirit of democracy and a new world, the poet required a medium of corresponding scope and flexibility, all-inclusive and capable of endless modulation and variety. Finding none ready to his hand, he created it. Not that Whitman did not draw for his resources on the great treasury of world-literature; and he profited by the efforts and achievement of predecessors. But the form in his hands and as he uses it is new. Whatever we may think

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

of the success of his total accomplishment, there are very many passages to which we cannot deny the name of poetry. Nor did Whitman work without conscious skill and deliberate regard for technical processes. His note-books and papers reveal the extreme calculation and pains with which he wrote, beginning with the collection of synonyms applying to his idea and mood, and so building them up gradually, with many erasures, corrections, and substitutions, into the finished poem. Much of the vigor of his style is due to his escape from conventional literary phrase-making and his return to the racy idiom of common life. His verse, apparently inchoate and so different from classical poetic forms, is shaped with a cunning incredible skill. And more than that, it is art, in that it is not a bare statement of fact, but communicates to us the poet's emotion, so that we realize the emotion in ourselves. When his purpose is considered, it is seen that no other technique was possible. His achievement proves that a new need creates its own means of expression.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

What is true of Whitman in respect to his technique is true in greater or less degree of every artist, working in any form. It is true of Pheidias, of Giotto and Michelangelo and Rembrandt, of Dante and Shakespeare, of Beethoven and Wagner, of Monet, of Rodin, in fine, from the beginnings of art to the day that now is. All have created out of existing forms of expression their own idiom and way of working. Every artist owes something to his predecessors, but language is re-created in the hands of each master and becomes a new instrument. There can be then no single formula for technical method nor any fixed and final standard of judgment.

An artist himself is justified from his own point of view in his concern with technique, for upon his technique depends his effectiveness of expression. His practice serves to keep alive the language and to develop its resources. Art in its concrete manifestations is an evolution. From Velasquez through Goya to Manet and Whistler is a line of inheritance. But a true artist recognizes that technique is only a means. As an artist he is

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

seeking to body forth in external form the vision within, and he tries to make his medium "faithful to the coloring of his own spirit." Every artist works out his characteristic manner; but the progress must be from within outwards. Toward the shaping of his own style he is helped by the practice of others, but he is helped and not hindered only in so far as the manner of others can be made genuinely the expression of his own feeling. Direct borrowing of a trick of execution and servile imitation of a style have no place in true art. A painter who would learn of Velasquez should study the master's technique, not that in the end he may paint like Velasquez, but that he may discover just what it was that the master, by means of his individual style, was endeavoring to express, and so bring to bear on his own environment here in America to-day the same ability to see and the same power of sympathetic and imaginative penetration that Velasquez brought to his environment at the court of seventeenth-century Spain. The way to paint like Velasquez is to be Velasquez. No man is a genius

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

by imitation. Every man may seek to be a master in his own right. Technique does not lead; it follows. Style is the man.

From within outwards. Art is the expression of sincere and vital feeling; the material thing, picture, statue, poem, which the artist conjures into being is only a means. The moment art is worshiped for its own sake, that moment decadence begins. "No one," says Leonardo, "will ever be a great painter who takes as his guide the paintings of other men." In general the history of art exhibits this course. In the beginning arises a man of deep and genuine feeling, the language at whose command, however, has not been developed to the point where it is able to carry the full burden of his meaning. Such a man is Giotto; and we have the "burning messages of prophecy delivered by the stammering lips of infants." In the generations which supervene, artists with less fervor of spirit but with growing skill of hand, increased with each inheritance, turn their efforts to the development of their means. The names of this period of experiment and research are Masaccio,

TECHNIQUE AND THE LAYMAN

Uccello, Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio. At length, when the fullness of time is come, emerges the master-mind, of original insight and creative power. Heir to the technical achievements of his predecessors, he is able to give his transcendent idea its supremely adequate expression. Content is perfectly matched by form. On this summit stand Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo. Then follow the Carracci, Domenichino, Guercino, Guido Reni, Carlo Dolci, men who mistake the master's manner for his meaning. The idea, the vital principle, has spent itself. The form only is left, and that is elaborated into the exuberance of decay. Painters find their impulse no longer in nature and life but in paint. Technique is made an end in itself. And art is dead, to be reborn in another shape and guise.

The relation of technique to appreciation in the experience of the layman begins now to define itself. Technique serves the artist for efficient expression; an understanding of it is of value to the layman in so far as the knowledge helps him to read the artist's language and thus to receive his message. Both

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

for artist and for layman technique is only a means. Out of his own intelligent and patient experience the layman can win his way to an understanding of methods; and his standard of judgment, good enough for his own purposes, is the degree of expressiveness which the work of art, by virtue of its qualities of execution, is able to achieve. Skill may be enjoyed intellectually for its own sake as skill; in itself it is not art. Technique is most successful when it is least perceived. *Ars celare artem*: art reveals life and conceals technique. We must understand something of technique and then forget it in appreciation. When we thrill to the splendor and glory of a sunset we are not thinking of the laws of refraction. Appreciation is not knowledge, but emotion.

IV

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

AS I swing through the wide country in the freshness and fullness of a blossoming, sun-steeped morning in May, breathing the breath of the fields and the taller by inches for the sweep of the hills and the reaches of sky above my head, every nerve in my body is alive with sensation and delight. My joy is in the fragrance of earth, the ingratiating warmth of the fresh morning, the spacious, inclosing air. My pleasure in this direct contact with the landscape is a physical reaction, to be enjoyed only by the actual experience of it; it cannot be reproduced by any other means; it can be recalled by memory but faintly and as the echo of sensation. There is, however, something else in the landscape which can be reproduced; and this recall may seem more glorious than the original in nature. There are elements in the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

scene which a painter can render for me more intensely and vividly than I perceived them for myself. These elements embody the value that the landscape has for my emotions. The scene appeals to something within me which lies beyond my actual physical contact with it and the mere sense of touch. The harmony that the eye perceives in these open fields, the gracious line of trees along the stream's edge, the tossing hills beyond, and the arch of the blue sky above impregnating the earth with light, is communicated to my spirit, and I feel that this reach of radiant country is an extension of my own personality. A painter, by the manipulation of his color and line and mass, concentrates and intensifies the harmony of it and so heightens its emotional value. The meaning of the scene for the spirit is conveyed in terms of color and mass.

Color and mass are the painter's medium, his language. The final import of art is the *idea*, the emotional content of the work. On his way to the expression of his idea the artist avails himself of material to give his feeling

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

concrete actuality and visible or audible realization. He paints a picture, glorious in color and compelling in the concentration of its massing; he carves a statue, noble in form or subtly rhythmic; he weaves a pattern of harmonious sounds. He values objects not for their own sake but for the energies they possess, — their power to rouse his whole being into heightened activity. And they have this power by virtue of their material qualities, as color and form or sound. A landscape is gay in springtime or sad in autumn. The difference in its effect upon us is not due to our knowledge that it is spring or autumn and our consciousness of the associations appropriate to each season. The emotional quality of the scene is largely a matter of its color. Let the spring landscape be shrouded in gray mist sifting down out of gray skies, and we are sad. Let the autumn fields and woodland sparkle and dance in the crisp golden sunlight, and our blood dances with them and we want to shout from full lungs. In music the major key wakens a different emotion from the minor. The note of a violin is virgin in

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

quality; the voice of the 'cello is the voice of experience. The distinctive emotional value of each instrument inheres in the character of its sound. These qualities of objects art uses as its language.

Though all art is one in essence, yet each art employs a medium of its own. In order to understand a work in its scope and true significance we must recognize that an artist thinks and feels in terms of his special medium. His impulse to create comes with his vision, actual or imaginative, of color or form, and his thought is transmitted to his hand, which shapes the work, without the intervention of words. The nature of his vehicle and the conditions in which he works determine in large measure the details of the form which his idea ultimately assumes. Thus a potter designs his vessel first with reference to its use and then with regard to his material, its character and possibilities. As he models his plastic clay upon a wheel, he naturally makes his bowl or jug round rather than sharply angular. A pattern for a carpet, to be woven by a system of little squares into the fabric,

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

will have regard for the conditions in which it is to be rendered, and it will differ in the character of its lines and masses from a pattern for a wall-paper, which may be printed from blocks. The designer in stained glass will try less to make a picture in the spirit of graphic representation than to produce an harmonious color-pattern whose outlines will be guided and controlled by the possibilities of the "leading" of the window. The true artist uses the conditions and very limitations of his material as his opportunity. The restraint imposed by the sonnet form is welcomed by the poet as compelling a collectedness of thought and an intensity of expression which his idea might not achieve if allowed to flow in freer channels. The worker in iron has his triumphs; the goldsmith has his. The limitations of each craft open to it effects which are denied to the other. There is an art of confectionery and an art of sculpture. The designer of frostings who has a right feeling for his art will not emulate the sculptor and strive to model in the grand style; the sculptor who tries to reproduce

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

imitatively the textures of lace or other fabrics and who exuberates in filigrees and fustinesses so far departs from his art as to rival the confectioner. In the degree that a painter tries to wrench his medium from its right use and function and attempts to make his picture tell a story, which can better be told in words, to that extent he is unfaithful to his art. Painting, working as it does with color and form, should confine itself to the expression of emotion and idea that can be rendered visible. On the part of the appreciator, likewise, the emotion expressed in one kind of medium is not to be translated into any other terms without a difference. Every kind of material has its special value for expression. The meaning of pictures, accordingly, is limited precisely to the expressive power of color and form. The impression which a picture makes upon the beholder may be phrased by him in words, which are his own means of expression; but he suggests the import of the picture only incompletely. If I describe in words Millet's painting of the "Sower" according to my understanding of it, I am

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

telling in my own terms what the picture means to me. What it meant to Millet, the full and true significance of the situation as the painter felt it, is there expressed upon his canvas in terms of visible aspect; and correspondingly, Millet's meaning is fully and truly received in the measure that we feel in ourselves the emotion roused by the sight of his color and form.

The essential content of a work of art, therefore, is modified in its effect upon us by the kind of medium in which it is presented. If an idea phrased originally in one medium is translated into the terms of another, we have *illustration*. Turning the pages of an "illustrated" novel, we come upon a plate showing a man and a woman against the background of a divan, a chair, and a tea-table. The man, in a frock coat, holding a top hat in his left hand, extends his right hand to the woman, who has just risen from the table. The legend under the picture reads, "Taking his hat, he said good-by." Here the illustrator has simply supplied a visible image of what was suggested in the text; the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

drawing has no interest beyond helping the reader to that image. It is a statement of the bare fact in other terms. In the hands of an artist, however, the translation may take on a value of its own, changing the original idea, adding to it, and becoming in itself an independent work of art. This value derives from the form into which the idea is translated. The frescoes of the Sistine Chapel are only sublime illustration; but how little of their power attaches to the subject they illustrate, and how much of their sublimity lies in the painter's rendering! Conversely, an example of the literary interpretation of a picture is Walter Pater's description of Leonardo's Mona Lisa.

The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all "the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of an-

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

tiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed ! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits ; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave ; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her ; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants ; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary ; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one ; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

It is Leonardo's conception, yet with a difference. Here the critic has woven about the subject an exquisite tissue of associations, a whole wide background of knowledge and thought and feeling which it lay beyond the painter's range to evoke; but the critic is denied the vividness, the immediateness and intimate warmth of vital contact, which the painter was able to achieve. The Lisa whom Leonardo shows us and the Lisa whom Pater interprets for us are the same in essence yet different in their power to affect us. The difference resulting from the kind of medium employed is well exemplified by Rossetti's "Blessed Damozel." The fundamental concept of both poem and picture is identical, but picture and poem have each its distinctive range and limitations and its own peculiar appeal. If we cancel the common element in the two, the difference remaining makes it possible for us to realize how much of the effect of a work of art inheres in the medium itself. Painting may be an aid to literature in that it helps us to more vivid images; the literary interpretation of pictures or music

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

gives to the works with which it deals an intellectual definiteness. But the functions peculiar to each art are not to be confounded nor the distinctions obscured.

Pictures are not a substitute for literature, and their true meaning is finally not to be translated into words. Their beauty is a visible beauty ; the emotions they rouse are such as can be conveyed through the sense of sight. In the end they carry their message sufficiently as color and mass. Midway, however, our enjoyment may be complicated by other elements which have their place in our total appreciation. Thus a painting of a landscape may appeal to us over and above its inherent beauty because we are already, out of actual experience, familiar with the scene it represents, and the sight of it wakens in our memory a train of pleasant allied associations. A ruined tower, in itself an exquisite composition in color and line and mass, may gather about it suggestions of romance, elemental passions and wild life, and may epitomize for the beholder the whole Middle Age. Associated interest, therefore, may be

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

sentimental or intellectual. It may be sensuous also, appealing to other senses than those of sight. The sense of touch plays a large part in our enjoyment of the world. We like the "feel" of objects, the catch of raw silk, the chill smoothness of burnished brass, the thick softness of mists, the "amorous wet" of green depths of sea. The senses of taste and smell may be excited imaginatively and contribute to our pleasure. Winslow Homer's breakers bring back to us the salt fragrance of the ocean, and in the presence of these white mad surges we feel the stinging spray in our faces and we taste the cosmic exhilaration of the sea-wind. But the final meaning of a picture resides in the total harmony of color and form, a harmony into which we can project our whole personality and which itself constitutes the emotional experience.

All language in its material aspect has a sensuous value, as the wealth of color of Venetian painting, the sumptuousness of Renaissance architecture, the melody of Mr. Swinburne's verse, the gem-like brilliance of

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

Stevenson's prose, the all-inclusive sensuousness, touched with sensuality, of Wagner's music-dramas. Because of the charm of beautiful language there are many art-lovers who regard the sensuous qualities of the work itself as making up the entire experience. Apart from any consideration of intention or expressiveness, the material *thing* which the artist's touch summons into form is held to be "its own excuse for being."

This order of enjoyment, valid as far as it goes, falls short of complete appreciation. It does not pass the delight one has in the radiance of gems or the glowing tincture of some fabric. The element of meaning does not enter in. There is a beauty for the eye and a beauty for the mind. The qualities of material may give pleasure to the senses; the object embodying these qualities becomes beautiful only as it is endowed with a significance awakened in the human spirit. A landscape, says Walter Crane, "owes a great part of its beauty to the harmonious relation of its leading lines, or to certain pleasant contrasts, or a certain impressiveness of form and

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

mass, and at the same time we shall perceive that this linear expression is inseparable from the sentiment or emotion suggested by that particular scene." In the appreciation of art, to stop with the sensuous appeal of the medium is to mistake means for an end. "Rhyme," says the author of "Intentions," "in the hands of a real artist becomes not merely a material element of metrical beauty, but a spiritual element of thought and passion also." An artist's color, glorious or tender, is only a symbol and manifestation to sense of his emotion. At first glance Titian's portrait of the "Man with the Glove" is an ineffable color-harmony. But truly seen it is infinitely more. By means of color and formal design Titian has embodied here his vision of superb young manhood; by the expressive power of his material symbols he has rendered visible his sense of dignity, of fineness, of strength in reserve. The color is beautiful because his idea was beautiful. Through the character of this young man as revealed and interpreted by the artist, the beholder is brought into contact with a vital

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

personality, whose influence is communicated to him; in the appreciation of Titian's message he sees and feels and lives.

The value of the medium resides not in the material itself but in its power for expression. When language is elaborated at the expense of the meaning, we have in so far forth sham art. It should be easy to distinguish in art between what is vital and what is mechanical. The mechanical is the product of mere execution and calls attention to the manner. The vital is born out of inspiration, and the living idea transmutes its material into emotion. Too great an effort at realization defeats the intended illusion, for we think only of the skill exercised to effect the result, and the operation of the intellect inhibits feeling. In the greatest art the medium is least perceived, and the beholder stands immediately in the presence of the artist's idea. The material is necessarily fixed and finite; the idea struggles to free itself from its medium and untrammelled to reach the spirit. It is mind speaking to mind. However complete the material ex-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

pression may seem, it is only a part of what the artist would say; imagination transcends the actual. In the art which goes deepest into life the medium is necessarily inadequate. The artist fashions his work in a sublime despair as he feels how little of the mighty meaning within him he is able to convey. In the greatest works rightly seen the medium becomes transparent. Within the Sistine Chapel the visitor, when once he has yielded to the illusion, is not conscious of plaster surface and pigment; indeed, he hardly sees color and design as such at all; through them he looks into the immensity of heaven, peopled with gods and godlike men. Consummate acting is that which makes the spectator forget that it is acting. The part and the player become one. The actor, in himself and in the words he utters, is the unregarded vehicle of the dramatist's idea. In a play like Ibsen's "Ghosts," the stage, the actors, the dialogue merge and fall away, and the overwhelming meaning stands revealed in its complete intensity. As the play opens, it cuts out a segment from the chaos of hu-

THE VALUE OF THE MEDIUM

man life; step by step it excludes all that is unessential, stroke by stroke with an inevitableness that is crushing, it converges to the great one-thing that the dramatist wanted to say, until at the end the spectator, conscious no longer of the medium but only of the idea and all-resolving emotion, bows down before its overmastering force with the cry, "What a *mind* is there!"

In the art which most completely achieves expression the medium is not perceived as distinct from the emotion of which the medium is the embodiment. In order to render expressive the material employed in its service, art seeks constantly to identify means and end, to make the form one with the content. The wayfarer out of his need of shelter built a hut, using the material which chance gave into his hand and shaping his design according to his resources; the purpose of his work was not the hut itself but shelter. So the artist in any form is impelled to creation by his need of expression; the thing which he creates is not the purpose and end of his effort, but only the means. Each art has its special medium, and

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

each medium has its peculiar sensuous charm and its own kind of expressiveness. This power of sensuous delight is incidental to the real beauty of the work ; and that beauty is the message the work is framed to convey to the spirit. In the individual work, the inspiring and shaping idea seeks so to fuse its material that we feel the idea could not have been phrased in any other way as we surrender to its ultimate appeal, — the sum of the emotional content which gave it birth and in which it reaches its fulfillment.

V

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

SCENE: The main hall of the Accademia in Venice.

Time: Noon of a July day.

Dramatis personae: A guide; two drab-colored and tired men; a group of women, of various ages, equipped with red-covered little volumes, and severally expressive of great earnestness, wide-eyed rapture, and giggles.

The guide, in strident, accentless tones: Last work of Titian. Ninety-nine years old. He died of smallpox.

A woman: Is that it?

A high voice on the outskirts: I'm going to get one for forty dollars.

Another voice: Well, I'm not going to pay more than fifty for mine.

A straggler: Eliza, look at those people. Oh, you missed it! (*Stopping suddenly.*) My, is n't that lovely!

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

Chorus : Yes, that's Paris Bordone. Which one is that? He has magnificent color.

The guide : The thing you want to look at is the five figures in front.

A voice : Oh, that's beautiful. I love that.

A man : Foreshortened; well, I should say so! But I say, you can't remember all these pictures.

The other man : Let's get out of this!

The guide, indicating a picture of the Grand Canal : This one has been restored.

A girl's voice : Why, that's the house where we are staying!

The guide : The next picture . . .

The squad shuffles out of range.

This little comedy, enacted in fact and here faithfully reported, is not without its pathos. These people are "studying art." They really want to understand, and if possible, to enjoy. They have visited galleries and seen many pictures, and they will visit other galleries and see many more pictures before their return home. They have read guide-books, noting the stars and double

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

stars; they have dipped into histories of art and volumes of criticism. They have been told to observe the dramatic force of Giotto, the line of Botticelli, the perfect composition of Raphael, the color of Titian; all this they have done punctiliously. They know in a vague way that Giotto was much earlier than Raphael, that Botticelli was rather pagan than Christian, that Titian belonged to the Venetian school. They have come to the fountain head of art, the very works themselves as gathered in the galleries; they have tried to remember what they have read and to do what they have been told; and now they are left still perplexed and unsatisfied.

The difficulty is that these earnest seekers after knowledge of art have laid hold on partial truths, but they have failed to see these partial truths in their right relation to the whole. The period in which an artist lived means something. His way of thinking and feeling means something. The quality of his color means something. But what does his *picture* mean? These people have not quite found the key by which to piece the frag-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ments of the puzzle into the complete design. They miss the central fact with regard to art; and as a consequence, the ways of approach to the full enjoyment of art, instead of bringing them nearer the centre, become for them a net-work of by-paths in which they enmesh themselves, and they are left to wander helplessly up and down and about in the blind-alleys of the labyrinth. The central fact with regard to art is this, that a work of art is the expression of some part of the artist's experience of life, his vision of some aspect of the world. For the appreciator, the work takes on a meaning as it becomes for him in his turn the expression of his own actual or possible experience and thus relates itself by the subtle links of feeling to his own life. This is the central fact; but there are side issues. Any single work of art is in itself necessarily finite. Because of limitations in both the artist and the appreciator the work cannot express immediately and completely of itself all that the author wished to convey; it can present but a single facet of his many-sided radiating personality. What is actually said

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

may be reinforced by some understanding on the beholder's part of what was intended. In order to win its fullest message, therefore, the appreciator must set the work against the large background out of which it has proceeded.

A visitor in the *Salon Carré* of the Louvre notes that there are arrayed before him pictures by Jan van Eyck and Memling, Raphael and Leonardo, Giorgione and Titian, Rembrandt and Metsu, Rubens and Van Dyck, Fouquet and Poussin, Velasquez and Murillo. Each one bears the distinctive impress of its creator. How different some of them, one from another,—the Virgin of Van Eyck from the Virgin of Raphael, Rembrandt's "Pilgrims at Emmaus" from the "Entombment" by Titian. Yet between others there are common elements of likeness. Raphael and Titian are distinguished by an opulence of form and a luxuriance of color which reveal supreme technical accomplishment in a fertile land under light-impregnated skies. The rigidity and restraint of Van Eyck and Memling suggest the tenta-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

tive early efforts of the art of a sober northern race. To a thoughtful student of these pictures sooner or later the question comes, Whence are these likenesses and these differences?

Hitherto I have referred to the creative mind and executive hand as generically *the artist*. I have thought of him as a type, representative of all the great class of those who feel and express, and who by means of their expression communicate their feeling. Similarly I have spoken of *the work of art*, as though it were complete in itself and isolated, sprung full-formed and panoplied from the brain of its creator, able to win its way and consummate its destiny alone. The type is conceived intellectually; in actual life the type resolves itself into individuals. So there are individual artists, each with his own distinctive gifts and ideals, each with his own separate experience of life, with his personal and special vision of the world, and his characteristic manner of expression. Similarly, a single work of art is not an isolated phenomenon; it is only a part of the artist's total perform-

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

ance, and to these other works it must be referred. The kind of work an artist sets himself to do is determined to some extent by the period into which he was born and the country in which he lived. The artist himself, heir to the achievements of his predecessors, is a development, and his work is the product of an evolution. A work of art, therefore, to be judged aright and truly appreciated, must be seen in its relation to its background, from which it detaches itself at the moment of consideration, — the background of the artist's personality and accomplishment and of the national life and ideals of his time.

If the layman's interest in art is more than the casual touch-and-go of a picture here, a concert there, and an entertaining book of an evening, he is confronted with the important matter of the study of art as it manifests itself through the ages and in diverse lands. It is not a question of practicing an art himself, for technical skill lies outside his province. The study of art in the sense proposed has to do with the consideration

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

of an individual work in its relation to all the factors that have entered into its production. The work of an artist is profoundly influenced by the national ideals and way of life of his race and of his age. The art of Catholic Italy is ecclesiastical; the art of the Protestant North is domestic and individual. The actual form an artist's work assumes is modified by the resources at his disposal, — resources both of material and of technical methods. Raphael may have no more to say than Giotto had, but he is able to express himself in a fuller and more finished way, because in his time the language of painting had become richer and more varied and the rhetoric of it had been carried to a farther point of development. Finally, as all art is in essence the expression of personality, a single work is to be understood in its widest intention and scope by reference to the total personality of the individual artist as manifested in his work collectively, and to be interpreted by the appreciator through his knowledge of the artist's experience of life.

In order to wrest its fullest expressiveness

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

from a work of art it is necessary as far as possible to regard the work from the artist's own point of view. We must try to see with his eyes and to feel with him what he was working for. To this end we must reconstruct imaginatively on a basis of the facts the conditions in which he lived and wrought. The difference between Giotto and Raphael is a difference not of individuality only. Each gives expression to the ideals and ways of thought of his age. Each is a creative mind, but each bases his performance upon what has gone before, and the form of their work is conditioned by the resources each had at his disposal. To discover the artist's purpose more completely than he was able to realize it for himself in the single work, — that is the aim and function of the historical study of art. A brief review of the achievement of Giotto and of Raphael may serve to illustrate concretely the application of the principle and to fix its value to appreciation.

In the period of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire art passed from Rome to Byzantium. The arts of sculpture and paint-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ing were employed in the service of the Church, imposing by its magnificence and all-powerful in its domination over the lives and minds of men. The function of art was to teach; its character was symbolic and decorative. Art had no separate and independent existence. It had no direct reference to nature; the pictorial representation of individual traits was quite outside its scope; a few signs fixed by convention sufficed. A fish — derived from the acrostic *ichthus* — symbolized the Saviour; a cross was the visible token of redeeming grace. And so through several hundred years. The twelfth century saw the beginnings of a change in the direction of spiritual and intellectual emancipation. The teachings and example of Francis of Assisi brought men to the consciousness of themselves and to a realization of the worth and significance of the individual life. The work of Giotto is the expression in art of the new spirit.

Of necessity Giotto founded his work upon the accepted forms of the Byzantine tradition. But Giotto was a man of genius

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

and a creative mind. In the expression of his fresh impulse and vital feeling, the assertion of new-found individuality, he tried to *realize* as convincingly and vividly as possible the situation with which he was dealing; and with this purpose he looked not back upon art but out upon nature. Where the Byzantine convention had presented but a sign and remote indication of form by means of flat color, Giotto endows his figures with life and movement and actuality by giving them a body in three dimensions; his forms exist in the round. Until his day, light and shade had not been employed; and such perspective as he was able to achieve he had to discover for himself. For the first time in Christian painting a figure has bodily existence. Giotto gives the first evidence, too, of a sense of the beauty of color, and of the value of movement as a means of added expressiveness. His power of composition shows an immense advance on his predecessors. In dealing with traditional subjects, as the Madonna and child, he follows in general the traditional arrangement. But in

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

those subjects where his own inventiveness is given free play, as in the series of frescoes illustrating the life of St. Francis, he reveals an extraordinary faculty of design and a dramatic sense which is matched by a directness and clarity of expression.

Not only in the technique of his craft was Giotto an innovator, but also in the direction of naturalness and reality of feeling. He was the first to introduce portraits into his work. His Madonnas and saints are no longer mere types; they are human and individual, vividly felt and characterized by immediate and present actuality. Giotto was the first realist, but he was a poet too. His insight into life is tempered by a deep sincerity and piety; his work is genuinely and powerfully felt. As a man Giotto was reverent and earnest, joyous and beautifully sane. As a painter, by force of the freshness of his impulse and the clarity of his vision, he created a new manner of expression. As an artist he reveals a true power of imaginative interpretation. The casual spectator of to-day finds him naïve and quaint. In the eyes of his con-

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

temporaries he was anything but that ; they regarded him as a marvel of reality, surpassing nature itself. When judged with reference to the conditions of life in which he worked and to the technical resources at his command, Giotto is seen to be of a very high order of creative mind.

The year 1300 divides the life of Giotto into two nearly equal parts ; the year 1500 similarly divides the life of Raphael. In the two centuries that intervene, the great age of Italian painting, initiated by Giotto, reaches its flower and perfection in Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Raphael. The years which followed the passing of these greatnesses were the years of decadence and eclipse. If we are to understand and justly appreciate the work of each man in its own kind, the painting of Giotto must be tried by other standards than those we apply to the judgment of Raphael. Giotto was a pioneer ; Raphael is a consummation. The two centuries between were a period of development and change, a development in all that regards technique, a change in national ideals and in the artist's

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

attitude toward life and toward his art. A quick survey of the period, if so hasty a generalization permits correctness of statement, will help us in the understanding of the craft and art of Raphael.

Giotto was succeeded by a host of lesser men, regarded as his followers, men who sought to apply the principles and methods of painting worked out by the master, but who lacked his inspiration and his power. Thus it was for nearly a hundred years. The turn of the fourteenth century into the fifteenth saw the emergence of new forces in the science and the mechanics of painting. The laws of perspective and foreshortening were made the object of special research and practice by men like Uccello (1397-1475), Piero dei Franceschi (1416-1492), and Mantegna (1431-1506). "Oh, what a beautiful thing this perspective is!" Uccello exclaimed, as he stood at his desk between midnight and dawn while his wife begged him to take some rest. In the first thirty years of the fifteenth century, Masaccio contributed to the knowledge of anatomy by his painting

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

of the nude form ; and the study of the nude was continued by Pollaiuolo and Luca Signorelli, in the second half of the century. Masaccio, also, was the first to place his figures in *air*, enveloping them in atmosphere. Verrocchio, a generation later than Masaccio, was one of the first of the Florentines to understand landscape and the part played in it by air and light. The realistic spirit, which suffices itself with subjects drawn from every-day actual experience, finds expression in the first half of the fifteenth century in the work of Andrea del Castagno. And so down through that century of spring and summer. Each painter in his own way carries some detail of his craft to a further point of development and prepares the path for the supreme triumphs of Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Raphael.

The growing mastery of the principles and technique of painting accompanied a change in the painter's attitude toward his art. Originally, painting, applied in subjection to architecture and employed in the service of the Church, was decorative in scope ;

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

its purpose was illustration, its function was to teach. As painters, from generation to generation, went deeper into the secrets of their craft, they became less interested in the didactic import of their work, and they concerned themselves more and more with its purely artistic significance. Religious subjects were no longer used merely as symbols for the expression of piety and as incitements to devotion; they became inherently artistic motives, valued as they furnished the artist an opportunity for the exercise of his knowledge and skill and for the exhibition of lovely color and significant form. A change in the mechanical methods of painting, also, had its influence on a change in the conception of the function of art. With a very few exceptions, the works of Giotto were executed in fresco as wall decorations. The principles of mural painting require that the composition shall be subordinated to the architectural conditions of the space it is to fill and that the color shall be kept flat. The fresco method meets these requirements admirably, but because of its flatness it has its

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

limitations. The introduction of an oil vehicle for the pigment material, in the fifteenth century, made possible a much greater range in gradated color, and reinforcing the increased knowledge of light and shade, aided in the evolution of decoration into the "easel picture," complete in itself. Released from its subjection to architecture, increasing its technical resources, and widening its interests in the matter of subject so as to include all life, painting becomes an independent and self-sufficing art.

Coincident with the development of painting as a craft, a mighty change was working itself out in the national ideals and in men's ways of thought and feeling. Already in Giotto's time the spirit of individualism had begun to assert itself in reaction from the dominance of an all-powerful restrictive ecclesiasticism, but the age was still essentially pietistic and according to its lights, religious. The fifteenth century witnessed the emancipation from tradition. The new humanism, which took its rise with the rediscovery of Greek culture, extended the intellectual

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

horizon and intensified the enthusiasm for beauty. Men's interest in life was no longer narrowly religious, but human ; their art became the expression of the new spirit. Early Christianity had been ascetic, enjoining negation of life and the mortification of the flesh. The men of the Renaissance, with something of the feeling of the elder Greeks, glorified the body and delighted in the pride of life. Pagan myths and Greek legends take their place alongside of Bible episodes and stories of saints and martyrs, as subjects of representation ; all served equally as motives for the expression of the artist's sense of the beauty of this world.

To this new culture and to these two centuries of growth and accomplishment in the practice of painting Raphael was heir. With a knowledge of the background out of which he emerges, we are prepared now to understand and appreciate his individual achievement. In approaching the study of his work we may ask, What is in general his ideal, his dominant motive, and in what manner and by what means has he realized his ideal?

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

How much was already prepared for him, what does he owe to the age and the conditions in which he worked, and what to the common store has he added that is peculiarly his own?

Whereas Giotto, the shepherd boy, was a pioneer, almost solitary, by sheer force of mind and by his sincerity and intensity of feeling breaking new paths to expression, for Raphael, on the contrary, the son of a painter and poet, the fellow-worker and well-beloved friend of many of the most powerful artistic personalities of his own or any age, the way was already prepared along which he moved in triumphant progress. The life of Raphael as an artist extends through three well-defined periods, the Umbrian, the Florentine, and the Roman, each one of which contributed a distinctive influence upon his development and witnessed a special and characteristic achievement.

To his father, who died when the boy was eleven years old, Raphael owed his poetic nature, scholarly tastes, and love of beauty, though he probably received from him no

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

training as a painter. His first master was Timoteo Viti of Urbino, a pupil of Francia; from him he learned drawing and acquired a "certain predilection for round and opulent forms which is in itself the negation of the ascetic ideal." At the age of seventeen he went from Urbino to Perugia; there he entered the workshop of Perugino as an assistant. The ideal of the Umbrian school was tenderness and sweetness, the outward and visible rapture of pietistic feeling; something of these qualities Raphael expressed in his Madonnas throughout his career. Under the teaching of Perugino he laid hold on the principles of "space composition" which he was afterwards to carry to supreme perfection.

From Perugia the young Raphael made his way to Florence, and here he underwent many influences. At that moment Florence was the capital city of Italian culture. It was here that the new humanism had come to finest flower. Scholarship was the fashion; art was the chief interest of this beauty-loving people. It was the Florentines who had

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

carried the scientific principles of painting to their highest point of development, particularly in their application to the rendering of the human figure. In Florence were collected the art treasures of the splendid century; here Michelangelo and Leonardo were at work; here were gathered companies of lesser men. By the study of Masaccio Raphael was led out to a fresh contact with nature. Fra Bartolomeo revealed to him further possibilities of composition and taught him some of the secrets of color. In Florence, too, he acknowledged the spell of Michelangelo and Leonardo. But though he learned from many teachers, Raphael was never merely an imitator. His scholarship and his skill he turned to his own uses; and when we have traced the sources of his motives and the influences in the moulding of his manner, there emerges out of the fusion a creative new force, which is his genius. What remains after our analysis is the essential Raphael.

Raphael's residence in Florence is the period of his Madonnas. From Florence

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

Raphael, twenty-five years old and now a master in his own right, was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II; and here he placed his talents and his mastership at the disposal of the Church. He found time to paint Madonnas and a series of powerful and lovely portraits; but these years in Rome, which brought his brief life to a close, are preëminently the period of the great frescoes, which are his supreme achievement. But even in these mature years, and though he was himself the founder of a school, he did not cease to learn. Michelangelo was already in Rome, and now Raphael came more immediately under his influence, although not to submit to it but to use it for his own ends. In Rome were revealed to him the culture of an older and riper civilization and the glories and perfectness of an elder art. Raphael laid antiquity under contribution to the consummation of his art and the fulfillment and complete realization of his genius.

This analysis of the elements and influences of Raphael's career as an artist—in-

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

adequate as it necessarily is — may help us to define his distinctive accomplishment. A comparison of his work with that of his predecessors and contemporaries serves to disengage his essential significance. By nature he was generous and tender ; the bent of his mind was scholarly ; and he was impelled by a passion for restrained and formal beauty. Chiefly characteristic of his mental make-up was his power of assimilation, which allowed him to respond to many and diverse influences and in the end to dominate and use them. He gathered up in himself the achievements of two centuries of experiment and progress, and fusing the various elements, he created by force of his genius a new result and stamped it with the seal of perfection. Giotto, to whom religion was a reality, was deeply in earnest about his message, and he phrased it as best he could with the means at his command ; his end was expression. Raphael, under the patronage of wealthy dilettanti and in the service of a worldly and splendor-loving Church, delighted in his knowledge and his skill ; he

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

worshiped art, and his end was beauty. The genius of Giotto is a first shoot, vigorous and alive, breaking ground hardily, and tentatively pushing into freer air. The genius of Raphael is the full-blown flower and final fruit, complete, mature. The step beyond is decay.

By reference to Giotto and to Raphael I have tried to illustrate the practical application of certain principles of art study. A work of art is not absolute ; both its content and its form are determined by the conditions out of which it proceeds. All judgment, therefore, must be comparative, and a work of art must be considered in its relation to its background and its conventions. Art is an interpretation of some aspect of life as the artist has felt it ; and the artist is a child of his time. It is not an accident that Raphael portrayed Madonnas, serene and glorified, and Millet pictured rude peasants bent with toil. Raphael's painting is the culmination of two centuries of eager striving after the adequate expression of religious sentiment ; in Millet's work the realism of

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

his age is transfigured. As showing further how national ideals and interests may influence individual production, we may note that the characteristic art of the Italian Renaissance is painting ; and Italian sculpture of the period is pictorial rather than plastic in motive and handling. Ghiberti's doors of the Florence Baptistery, in the grouping of figures and the three and four planes in perspective of the backgrounds, are essentially pictures in bronze. Conversely, in the North the characteristic art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is carving and sculpture ; and "the early painters represented in their pictures what they were familiar with in wood and stone ; so that not only are the figures dry and hard, but in the groups they are packed one behind another, heads above heads, without really occupying space, in imitation of the method adopted in the carved relief." Some knowledge of the origin and development of a given form of technique, a knowledge to be reached through historical study, enables us to measure the degree of expressiveness of a given

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

work. The ideas of a child may be very well worth listening to, though his range of words is limited and his sentences are crude and halting. A grown man, having acquired the trick of language, may talk fluently and say nothing. In our endeavor to understand a work of art, a poem by Chaucer or by Tennyson, a picture by Greco or by Manet, a prelude by Bach or a symphony by Brahms, we may ask, Of that which the artist wanted to say, how much could he say with the means at his disposal? With a sense of the artist's larger motive, whether religious sentiment, or a love of sheer beauty of color and form, or insight into human character, we are aided by a study of the history of technique to determine how far the artist with the language at his command was able to realize his intention.

But not only is art inspired and directed by the time-spirit of its age. A single work is the expression for the artist who creates it of his ideal. An artist's ideal, what he sets himself to accomplish, is the projection of his personality, and that is determined by

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

many influences. He is first of all a child of his race and time ; inheritance and training shape him to these larger conditions. Then his ideal is modified by his special individuality. A study of the artist's character as revealed in his biography leads to a fuller understanding of the intention and scope of his work. The events of his life become significant as they are seen to be the causes or the results of his total personality, that which he was in mind and temperament. What were the circumstances that moulded his character and decided his course? What events did he shape to his own purpose by the active force of his genius? What was the special angle of vision from which he looked upon the world? The answers to these questions are the clue to the full drift of his work. As style is the expression of the man, so conversely a knowledge of the man is an entrance into the wider and subtler implications of his style. We explore the personality of the man in order more amply to interpret his art, and we turn to his art as the revelation of his personality. In studying an artist we must look for his *ten-*

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

dency and seek the unifying principle which binds his separate works into a whole. An artist has his successive periods or "manners." There is the period of apprenticeship, when the young man is influenced by his predecessors and his masters. Then he comes into his own, and he registers nature and life as he sees it freshly for himself. Finally, as he has mastered his art and won some of the secrets of nature, and as his own character develops, he tends more and more to impose his subjective vision upon the world, and he subordinates nature to the expression of his distinctive individuality. A single work, therefore, is to be considered in relation to its place in the artist's development; it is but a part, and it is to be interpreted by reference to the whole.

In the study of biography, however, the man must not be mistaken for the artist; his acts are not to be confounded with his message. "A man is the spirit he worked in; not what he did, but what he became." We must summon forth the spirit of the man from within the wrappages of material and acci-

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

dent. In our preoccupation with the external details of a man's familiar and daily life it is easy to lose sight of his spiritual experience, which only is of significance. Whistler, vain, aggressive, quarrelsome, and yet so exquisite and so subtle in extreme refinement, is a notable example of a great spirit and a little man. Wagner wrote to Liszt: "As I have never felt the real bliss of love, I must erect a monument to the most beautiful of my dreams, in which from beginning to end that love shall be thoroughly satiated." Not the Wagner of fact, but the Wagner of dreams. Life lived in the spirit and imagination may be different from the life of daily act. So we should transcend the material, trying through that to penetrate to the spiritual. It is not a visit to the artist's birthplace that signifies, it is not to do reverence before his likeness or cherish a bit of his handwriting. All this may have a value to the disciple as a matter of loyalty and fine piety. But in the end we must go beyond these externals that we may enter intelligently and sympathetically into the temper of his mind and mood and there

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

find disclosed what he thought and felt and was able only in part to express. It is not the man his neighbors knew that is important. His work is the essential thing, what that work has to tell us about life in terms of emotional experience.

Studies in the history of art and in biography are avenues of approach to the understanding of a work of art; they do not in themselves constitute appreciation. Historical importance must not be mistaken for artistic significance. In reading about pictures we may forget to look at them. The historical study of art in its various divisions reduces itself to an exercise in analysis, resolving a given work into its elements. But art is a synthesis. In order to appreciate a work the elements must be gathered together and fused into a whole. A statue or a picture is meant not to be read about, but to be looked at; and its final message must be received through vision. Our knowledge will serve us little if we are not sensitive to the appeal of color and form. There is danger that preoccupation with the history of art may betray

THE BACKGROUND OF ART

us if we are not careful to keep it in its place. The study of art should follow and not lead appreciation. We are apt to see what we are looking for. So we ought to come to each work freshly without prejudice or bias ; it is only afterwards that we should bring to bear on it our knowledge about the facts of its production. Connoisseurship is a science and may hold within itself no element of æsthetic enjoyment. Appreciation is an art, and the quality of it depends upon the appreciator himself. The end of historical study is not a knowledge of facts for their own sake, but through those facts a deeper penetration and fuller true enjoyment. By the aid of such knowledge we are enabled to recognize in any work more certainly and abundantly the expression of an emotional experience which relates itself to our own life.

The final meaning of art to the appreciator lies in just this sense of its relation to his own experience. The greatest works are those which express reality and life, not limited and temporary conditions, but life universal and for all time. Without commentary these

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

carry their message, appealing to the wisest and the humblest. Gather into a single room a fragment of the Parthenon frieze, Michelangelo's "Day and Night," Botticelli's "Spring," the sprites and children of Donatello and Della Robbia, Velasquez's "Pope Innocent," Rembrandt's "Cloth-weavers," Frans Hals' "Musician," Millet's "Sower," Whistler's "Carlyle." There is here no thought of period or of school. These living, present, eternal verities are all one company.

VI

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

THE greatest art is universal. It transcends the merely local conditions in which it is produced. It sweeps beyond the individual personality of its creator, and links itself with the common experience of all men. The Parthenon, so far as it can be reconstructed in imagination, appeals to a man of any race or any period, whatever his habit of mind or degree of culture, as a perfect utterance. The narrow vault of the Sistine Chapel opens into immensity, and every one who looks upon it is lifted out of himself into new worlds. Shakespeare's plays were enjoyed by the apprentices in the pit and royalty in the boxes, and so all the way between. The man Shakespeare, of such and such birth and training, and of this or that experience in life, is entirely merged in his creations; he becomes the impersonal channel of expression of the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

profoundest, widest interpretation of life the world has known. Such art as this comes closest to the earth and extends farthest into infinity, "beyond the reaches of our souls."

But there is another order of art, more immediately the product of local conditions, the personal expression of a distinctive individuality, phrased in a language of less scope and currency, and limited as to its content in the range of its appeal. These lesser works have their place; they can minister to us in some moment of need and at some point in our development. Because of their limitations, however, their effectiveness can be furthered by interpretation. A man more sensitive than we to the special kind of beauty which they embody and better versed in their language, can discover to us a significance and a charm in them to which we have not penetrated. To help us to the fullest enjoyment of the great things and to a more enlightened and juster appreciation of the lesser works is the service of criticism.

We do not wholly possess an experience until, having merged ourselves in it, we then

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

react upon it and become conscious of its significance. A novel, a play, a picture interests us, and we surrender to the enjoyment of the moment. Afterwards we think about our pleasure, defining the nature of the experience and analyzing the means by which it was produced, the subject of the work and the artist's method of treating it. It may be that we tell our pleasure to a friend, glad also perhaps to hear his opinion of the matter. The impulse is natural; the practice is helpful. And herein lies the origin of criticism. In so far as an appreciator does not rest in his immediate enjoyment of a work of art, but seeks to account for his pleasure, to trace the sources of it, to establish the reasons for it, and to define its quality, so far he becomes a critic. As every man who perceives beauty in nature and takes it up into his own life is potentially an artist, so every man is a critic in the measure that he reasons about his enjoyment. The critical processes, therefore, are an essential part of our total experience of art, and criticism may be an aid to appreciation.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

The function of criticism has been variously understood through the centuries of its practice. Early modern criticism, harking back to the method of Aristotle, concerned itself with the form of a work of art. From the usage of classic writers it deduced certain "rules" of composition; these formulas were applied to the work under examination, and that was adjudged good or bad in the degree that it conformed or failed to conform to the established rules. It was a criticism of law-giving and of judgment. In the eighteenth century criticism extended its scope by the admission of a new consideration, passing beyond the mere form of the work and reckoning with its power to give pleasure. Addison, in his critique of "Paradise Lost," still applies the formal tests of the Aristotelian canons, but he discovers further that a work of art exists not only for the sake of its form, but also for the expression of beautiful ideas. This power of "affecting the imagination" he declares is the "very life and highest perfection" of poetry. This is a long step in the right direction. With

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

the nineteenth century, criticism conceives its aims and procedure in new and larger ways. A work of art is now seen to be an evolution; and criticism adapts to its own uses the principles of historical study and the methods of scientific investigation. Recognizing that art is organic, that an art-form, as religious painting or Gothic architecture or the novel, is born, develops, comes to maturity, lapses, and dies, that an individual work is the product of "race, environment, and the moment," that it is the expression also of the personality of the artist himself, criticism no longer regards the single work as an isolated phenomenon, but tries to see it in its relation to its total background.

Present-day criticism avails itself of this larger outlook upon art. But the ends to be reached are understood differently by different critics. With M. Brunetière, to cite now a few representative names, criticism is authoritative and dogmatic: he looks at the work objectively, refusing to be the dupe of his pleasure, if he has any; and approaching

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

the work in the spirit of dispassionate impersonal inquiry as an object of historical importance and scientific interest, he decrees that it is good or bad. Matthew Arnold considers literature a "criticism of life," and he values a work with reference to the moral significance of its ideas. Ruskin's criticism is didactic; he wishes to educate his public, and by force of his torrential eloquence he succeeds in persuading his disciples into acceptance of his teaching, though he may not always convince. Impressionistic criticism, as with M. Anatole France or M. Jules Lemaitre, does not even try to see the work "as in itself it really is," but is an account of the critic's own subjective reaction on it, a narrative of what he thought and felt in this chance corner of experience. With Walter Pater criticism becomes *appreciation*. A given work of art produces a distinctive impression and communicates a special and unique pleasure; this active power constitutes its beauty. So the function of the critic as Pater conceives it is "to distinguish, analyze, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced." The interpretative critic — represented in the practice of Pater — stands between a work of art and the appreciator as mediator and revealer.

Each kind of criticism performs a certain office, and is of use within its own chosen sphere. To the layman, for his purposes of appreciation, that order of criticism will be most helpful which responds most closely and amply to his peculiar needs. A work of art may be regarded under several aspects, its quality of technical execution, its power of sensuous appeal, its historical importance; and to each one of these aspects some kind of criticism applies. The layman's reception of art includes all these considerations, but subordinates them to the total experience. His concern, therefore, is to define the service of criticism to appreciation.

The analysis of a work of art resolves it

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

into these elements. There is first of all the emotion which gives birth to the work and which the work is designed to express. The emotion, to become definite, gathers about an idea, conceived in the terms of its own medium, as form, or color and mass, or musical relations; and this artistic idea presents itself as the subject or motive of the work. The emotion and artistic idea, in order that they may be expressed and become communicable, embody themselves in material, as the marble of a statue, the pigment of a picture, the audible tones of a musical composition. This material form has the power to satisfy the mind and delight the senses. Through the channel of the senses and the mind the work reaches the feelings; and the æsthetic experience is complete.

As art springs out of emotion, so it is to be received as emotion; and a work to be appreciated in its true spirit must be enjoyed. But to be completely enjoyed it must be understood. We must know what the artist was trying to express, and we must be able to read his language; then we are prepared to take

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

delight in the form and to respond to the emotion.

To help us to understand a work of art in all the components that entered into the making of it is the function of historical study. Such study enables us to see the work from the artist's own point of view. A knowledge of its background, the conditions in which the artist wrought and his own attitude toward life, is the clue to his ideal; and by an understanding of the language it was possible for him to employ, we can measure the degree of expressiveness he was able to achieve. This study of the artist's purpose and of his methods is an exercise in explanation.

The interpretation of art, for which we look to criticism, deals with the picture, the statue, the book, specifically in its relation to the appreciator. What is the special nature of the experience which the work communicates to us in terms of feeling? In so far as the medium itself is a source of pleasure, by what qualities of form has the work realized the conditions of beauty proper to it, delight-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ing thus the senses and satisfying the mind? These are the questions which the critic, interpreting the work through the medium of his own temperament, seeks to answer.

Theoretically, the best critic of art would be the artist himself. He above all other men should understand the subtle play of emotion and thought in which a work of art is conceived; and the artist rather than another should trace the intricacies and know the cunning of the magician processes by which the immaterial idea builds itself into visible actuality. In practice, however, the theory is not borne out by the fact. The artist as such is very little conscious of the workings of his spirit. He is creative rather than reflective, synthetic and not analytic. From his contact with nature and from his experience of life, out of which rises his generative emotion, he moves directly to the fashioning of expressive forms, without pausing on the way to scan too closely the "meaning" of his work. Mr. Bernard Shaw remarks that Ibsen, giving the rein to the creative impulse of his poetic nature, produced in "Brand" and "Peer

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

Gynt" a "great puzzle for his intellect." Wagner, he says, "has expressly described how the intellectual activity which he brought to the analysis of his music dramas was in abeyance during their creation. Just so do we find Ibsen, after composing his two great dramatic poems, entering on a struggle to become intellectually conscious of what he had done." Moreover, the artist is in the very nature of things committed to one way of seeing. His view of life is limited by the trend of his own dominant and creative personality; what he gains in intensity and penetration of insight he loses in breadth. He is less quick to see beauty in another guise than that which his own imagination weaves for him; he is less receptive of other ways of envisaging the world.

The ideal critic, on the contrary, is above everything else catholic and tolerant. It is his task to discover beauty in whatever form and to affirm it. By nature he is more sensitive than the ordinary man, by training he has directed the exercise of his powers toward their fullest scope, and by experience of art

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

in its diverse manifestations he has certified his judgment and deepened his capacity to enjoy. The qualifications of an authentic critic are both temperament and scholarship. Mere temperament uncorrected by knowledge may vibrate exquisitely when swept by the touch of a thing of beauty, but its music may be in a quite different key from the original motive. Criticism must relate itself to the objective fact; it should interpret and not transpose. Mere scholarship without temperament misses art at its centre, that art is the expression and communication of emotional experience; and the scholar in criticism may wander his leaden way down the by-paths of a sterile learning. To mediate between the artist and the appreciator, the critic must understand the artist and he must feel with the appreciator. He is at once the artist translated into simpler terms and the appreciator raised to a higher power of perception and response.

The service of criticism to the layman is to furnish him a clue to the meaning of the work in hand, and by the critic's own response

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

to its beauty to reveal its potency and charm. With technique as such the critic is not concerned. Technique is the business of the artist; only those who themselves practice an art are qualified to judge in matters of practice. The form is significant to the appreciator only so far as regards its expressiveness and beauty. It is not the function of the critic to tell the artist what his work *should be*; it is the critic's mission to reveal to the appreciator what the work *is*. That revelation will be accomplished in terms of the critic's own experience of the beauty of the work, an experience imaged forth in such phrases that the pleasure the work communicates is conveyed to his readers in its true quality and full intensity. It is not enough to dogmatize as Ruskin dogmatizes, to bully the reader into a terrified acceptance. It is not enough to determine absolute values as Matthew Arnold seeks to do, to fix certain canons of intellectual judgment, and by the application of a formula as a touchstone, to decide that this work is excellent and that another is less good. Really serviceable criti-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

cism is that which notes the special and distinguishing quality of beauty in any work and helps the reader to live out that beauty in his own experience.

These generalizations may be made more immediate and practical by examples. In illustration of the didactic manner in criticism I may cite a typical paragraph of Ruskin, chosen from his "Mornings in Florence."

First, look at the two sepulchral slabs by which you are standing. That farther of the two from the west end is one of the most beautiful pieces of fourteenth-century sculpture in this world. . . . And now, here is a simple but most useful test of your capacity for understanding Florentine sculpture or painting. If you can see that the lines of that cap are both right, and lovely; that the choice of the folds is exquisite in its ornamental relations of line; and that the softness and ease of them is complete,—though only sketched with a few dark touches,—then you can understand Giotto's drawing, and Botticelli's;—Donatello's carving, and Luca's. But if you see nothing in *this* sculpture, you will see nothing in theirs, *of* theirs. Where they choose to imitate flesh, or silk, or to play any vulgar modern trick with marble — (and they

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

often do) — whatever, in a word, is French, or American, or Cockney, in their work, you can see; but what is Florentine, and for ever great — unless you can see also the beauty of this old man in his citizen's cap, — you will see never.

The earnest and docile though bewildered layman is intimidated into thinking that he sees it, whether he really does or not. But it is a question if the contemplation of the "beauty of this old man in his citizen's cap," however eager and serious the contemplation may be, adds much to his experience; it may be doubted whether as a result of his effort toward the understanding of the rightness and loveliness of the lines of the cap and the exquisiteness of the choice of folds, which the critic has pointed out to him with threatening finger, he feels that life is a fuller and finer thing to live.

An example of the intellectual estimate, the valuation by formulas, and the assignment of abstract rank, is this paragraph from Matthew Arnold's essay on Wordsworth.

Wherever we meet with the successful balance, in Wordsworth, of profound truth of subject with

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

profound truth of execution, he is unique. His best poems are those which most perfectly exhibit this balance. I have a warm admiration for "Laodameia" and for the great "Ode;" but if I am to tell the very truth, I find "Laodameia" not wholly free from something artificial, and the great "Ode" not wholly free from something declamatory. If I had to pick out poems of a kind most perfectly to show Wordsworth's unique power, I should rather choose poems such as "Michael," "The Fountain," "The Highland Reaper." And poems with the peculiar and unique beauty which distinguishes these, Wordsworth produced in considerable number; besides very many other poems of which the worth, although not so rare as the worth of these, is still exceedingly high.

Thus does the judicial critic mete out his estimate by scale and measuring-rod. We are told dogmatically what is good and what is less good; but of distinctive quality and energizing life-giving virtues, not a word. The critic does not succeed in communicating to us anything of Wordsworth's special charm and power. We are informed, but we are left cold and unresponding.

The didactic critic imposes his standard

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

upon the layman. The judicial critic measures and awards. The appreciative critic does not attempt to teach or to judge ; he makes possible to his reader an appreciation of the work of art simply by recreating in his own terms the complex of his emotions in its presence. Instead of declaring the work to be beautiful or excellent, he makes it beautiful in the very telling of what it means to him. As the artist interprets life, disclosing its depths and harmonies, so the appreciative critic in his turn interprets art, reconstituting the beauty of it in his own terms. Through his interpretation, the layman is enabled to enter more fully into the true spirit of the work and to share its beauty in his own experience.

In contrast to the passage from Arnold is this paragraph from an essay on Wordsworth by Walter Pater.

And so he has much for those who value highly the concentrated presentment of passion, who appraise men and women by their susceptibility to it, and art and poetry as they afford the spectacle of it. Breaking from time to time into the pen-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

sive spectacle of their daily toil, their occupations near to nature, come those great elementary feelings, lifting and solemnizing their language and giving it a natural music. The great, distinguishing passion came to Michael by the sheepfold, to Ruth by the wayside, adding these humble children of the furrow to the true aristocracy of passionate souls. In this respect, Wordsworth's work resembles most that of George Sand, in those of her novels which depict country life. With a penetrative pathos, which puts him in the same rank with the masters of the sentiment of pity in literature, with Meinhold and Victor Hugo, he collects all the traces of vivid excitement which were to be found in that pastoral world — the girl who rung her father's knell; the unborn infant feeling about its mother's heart; the instinctive touches of children; the sorrows of the wild creatures, even — their home-sickness, their strange yearnings; the tales of passionate regret that hang by a ruined farm-building, a heap of stones, a deserted sheepfold; that gay, false, adventurous, outer world, which breaks in from time to time to bewilder and deflower these quiet homes; not "passionate sorrow" only, for the overthrow of the soul's beauty, but the loss of, or carelessness for personal beauty even, in those whom men have wronged — their pathetic

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

wanness ; the sailor " who, in his heart, was half a shepherd on the stormy seas ; " the wild woman teaching her child to pray for her betrayer ; incidents like the making of the shepherd's staff, or that of the young boy laying the first stone of the sheepfold ; — all the pathetic episodes of their humble existence, their longing, their wonder at fortune, their poor pathetic pleasures, like the pleasures of children, won so hardly in the struggle for bare existence ; their yearning towards each other, in their darkened houses, or at their early toil. A sort of biblical depth and solemnity hangs over this strange, new, passionate, pastoral world, of which he first raised the image, and the reflection of which some of our best modern fiction has caught from him.

Here is the clue to Wordsworth's meaning ; and the special quality and power of his work, gathering amplitude and intensity as it plays across the critic's temperament, is reconstituted in other and illuminating images which communicate the emotion to us. The critic has felt more intimately than we the appeal of this poetry, and he kindles in us something of his own enthusiasm. So we return to Wordsworth for our-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

selves, more alert to divine his message, more susceptible to his spell, that he may work in us the magic of evocation.

Criticism is of value to us as appreciators in so far as it serves to recreate in us the experience which the work was designed to convey. But criticism is not a short cut to enjoyment. We cannot take our pleasure at second hand. We must first come to the work freshly and realize our own impression of it; then afterwards we may turn to the critic for a further revelation. Criticism should not shape our opinion, but should stimulate appreciation, carrying us farther than we could go ourselves, but always in the same direction with our original impression. There is a kind of literary exercise, calling itself criticism, which takes a picture or a book as its point of departure and proceeds to create a work of art in its own right, attaching itself only in name to the work which it purports to criticise. "Who cares," exclaims a clever maker of epigrams, "whether Mr. Ruskin's views on Turner are sound or not? What does it

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

matter ? That mighty and majestic prose of his, so fervid and so fiery-coloured in its noble eloquence, so rich in its elaborate symphonic music, so sure and certain, at its best, in subtle choice of word and epithet, is at least as great a work of art as any of those wonderful sunsets that bleach or rot on their corrupted canvases in England's Gallery." A very good appreciation of Ruskin, this. But the answer is that such writing as is here attributed to Ruskin is magnificent: it may be art ; but it is not true criticism. A work of art is not "impressive" merely, but "expressive" too. Criticism in its relation to the work itself has an objective base, and it must be steadied and authenticated by constant reference to the original fact. Criticism is not the source of our enjoyment but a medium of interpretation.

Before we turn to criticism, therefore, we must first, as Pater suggests, know our own impression as it really is, discriminate it, and realize it distinctly. Only so shall we escape becoming the dupe of some more aggressive personality. In our mental life sugges-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

tion plays an important and perhaps unrecognized part. In a certain frame of mind we can be persuaded into believing anything and into liking anything. When, under the influence of authority or fashion, we think we care for that which has no vital and consciously realized relation to our own experience, we are the victims of a kind of hypnotism, and there is little hope of our ultimate adjustment over against art. It is far better honestly to like an inferior work and know why we like it than to pretend to like a good one. In the latter case no real progress or development is possible, for we have no standards that can be regarded as final; we are swayed by the authority or influence which happens at that moment to be most powerful. In the former case we are at least started in the right direction. Year by year, according to the law of natural growth, we come to the end of the inferior work which up to that time has been able to minister to us, and we pass on to new and greater works that satisfy the demands of our deepening experience. It is sometimes asked if we ought

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

not to try to like the best things in art. I should answer, the very greatest things we do not have to *try* to like; the accent of greatness is unmistakable, and greatness has a message for every one. As regards the lesser works, we ought to be willing to grow up. There was a time when I enjoyed "Robinson Crusoe" in words of one syllable. If I had *tried* then to like Mr. George Meredith, I should not really have enjoyed him, and I should have missed the fun of "Robinson Crusoe." Everything in its time and place. The lesser works have their use: they may be a starting-point for our entrance into life; and they furnish a basis of comparison by which we are enabled to realize the greatness of the truly great. We must value everything in its own kind, affirming what it is, and not regretting what it is not. But the prerequisite of all appreciation, without which our contact with art is a pastime or a pretense, is that we be honest with ourselves. In playing solitaire at least we ought not to cheat.

So the layman must face the situation squarely and accept the responsibility of de-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ciding finally for himself. On the way we may look to criticism to guide us to those works which are meant for us. In art as in the complex details of living, there is need of selection; and criticism helps toward that. In literature alone, to name but a single art, there is so much to be left unread which the length of our life would not otherwise permit us to escape, that we are grateful to the critic who aids us to omit gracefully and with success. But the most serviceable criticism is positive and not destructive. The lesser works may have a message for us, and it is that message in its distinctive quality which the critic should affirm. In the end, however, the use we make of criticism should not reduce itself to an unquestioning acceptance of authority. In the ceremonial of the Roman service, at the moment preceding the elevation of the Host, two acolytes enter the chancel, bearing candles, and kneel between the congregation and the ministrants at the altar; the tapers, suffusing the altar in their golden radiance, throw the dim figures of the priests into a greater gloom and mystery. So it hap-

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

pens that art often is enshrouded by the off-giving of those who would seem to illuminate it; and "dark with excess of light," the obscurity is intensified. The layman is told of the virginal poetry of early Italian painting; he is bidden to sit at the homely, substantial feast of the frank actuality of Dutch art; he listens in puzzled wonder to the glorification of Velasquez and Goya; he reads in eloquent, glowing language of the splendor of Turner. He is more than half persuaded; but he does not quite understand. From this tangle of contending interests there seems for the moment to be no way out. It is assumed that the layman has no standard of his own; and he yields himself to the appeal which comes to him immediately at the instant. The next day, perhaps, brings a new interest or another judgment which runs counter to the old. Back and forth and back again, without purpose and without reason; it is only an endless recurrence of the conflict instead of development and progress. Taking all his estimates at second hand, so for his opinion even of a concert or a play he

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

is at the mercy of a critic who may have dined badly. Some boy, caught young at the university and broken to miscellaneous tasks on a big newspaper, is sent to "do" a picture-exhibition, a concert, and the theatre in the same day. He is expected to "criticise" in an hour the work of a lifetime of struggle and effort and knowledge and thought and feeling. This is the guide of opinion and the foundation of artistic creed. I have stated the reduction to absurdity of the case for authority in criticism. If the layman who leans too heavily upon criticism comes to realize the hopelessness of his position and thinks the situation through to its necessary conclusion, he sees that the authority of criticism is not absolute, but varies with the powers and range of the individual critic, and that at the last he must find his standard within himself.

There are, of course, certain standards of excellence recognized universally and certain principles of taste of universal validity; and to these standards and these principles must be referred our individual estimates for comparison and correction. Given a native

THE SERVICE OF CRITICISM

sensibility to the worth of life and to the appeal of beauty, the justice of our estimate will be in proportion to the extent of our knowledge of life and of our contact with art. Our individual judgment, therefore, must be controlled by experience, — our momentary judgments by the sum of our own experience, and our total judgment by universal experience. In all sound criticism and right appreciation there must be a basis of disciplined taste. We must guard ourselves against whims and caprice, even our own. So the individual may not cut loose altogether from external standards. But these must be brought into relation to his personal needs and applied with reference to his own standard. Finally, for his own uses, the individual has the right to determine the meaning and value to him of any work of art in the measure that it links itself with his own actual or possible experience and becomes for him a revelation of fuller life. For beauty is the power possessed by objects to quicken us with a sense of larger personality; and art, whether the arts of form or of representa-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

tion, is the material bodying forth of beauty as the artist has perceived it and the means by which his emotion in its presence is communicated. Upon this conception of beauty and this interpretation of the scope and function of art rests the justice of the personal estimate.

VII

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

TO become sensitive to the meaning of color and form and sound as the artist employs them for expression, to feel a work of art in its relation to its background, to find in criticism enlightenment and guidance but not a substitute for one's own experience, — these are methods of approach to art. But the appreciator has yet to penetrate art's inmost secret. At the centre, as the motive of all his efforts to understand the language of art and the processes of technique, as the goal of historical study and the purpose of his recourse to criticism, stands the work itself with its power to attract and charm. Here is Millet's painting of the "Sower." In the actual presence of the picture the appreciator's experience is complex. Analysis resolves it into considerations of the material form of the work, involving its sen-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

suous qualities and the processes of execution, considerations also of the subject of the picture, which gathers about itself many associations out of the beholder's own previous knowledge of life. But the clue to the final meaning of the work, its meaning both to the artist and to the appreciator, is contained in the answer to the question, Why did Millet paint this picture? And just what is it designed to express? (~~meaning in life?~~)

Art is born out of emotion. Though the symbols it may employ to expression, the forms in which it may manifest itself, are infinitely various in range and character, essentially all art is one. A work of art is the material bodying forth of the artist's sense of a meaning in life which unfolds itself to him as harmony and to which his spirit responds accordantly. It may be a pattern he has conceived; or he adapts material to a new use in response to a new need: the artist is here a craftsman. He is stirred by the tone and incident of a landscape or by the force or charm of some personality: and he puts brush to canvas. He apprehends the com-

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

plex rhythms of form: and the mobile clay takes shape under his fingers. He feels the significance of persons acting and reacting in their contact with one another: and he pens a novel or a drama. He is thrilled by the emotion attending the influx of a great idea; philosophy is touched with feeling: and the thinker becomes a poet. The discords of experience resolve themselves within him into harmonies: and he gives them out in triumphant harmonies of sound. The particular medium the artist chooses in which to express himself is incidental to the feeling to be conveyed. The stimulus to emotion which impels the artist to create and the essential content of his work is *beauty*. As beauty, then, is the very stuff and fibre of art, inextricably bound up with it, so in our effort to relate art to our experience we may seek to know something of the nature of beauty and its place in common life.

During a visit in Philadelphia I was conducted by a member of the firm through the great Locomotive Works in that city. From the vast office, with its atmosphere

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

of busy, concentrated quiet, punctuated by the clicking of many typewriters, I was led through doors and passages, and at length came upon the shrieking inferno of the shops. The uproar and din were maddening. Overhead, huge cranes were swinging great bulks of steel from one end of the cavernous shed to the other; vague figures were moving obscurely in the murk; the floor was piled and littered with heaps of iron-work of unimaginable shapes. After a time we made our way into another area where there was more quiet but no less confusion. I yelled to my guide, "Such a rumpus and row I never saw; it is chaos come again!" And he replied, "Why, to me it is all a perfect order. Everything is in its place. Every man has his special job and does it. I know the meaning and purpose of all those parts that seem to you to be thrown around in such a mess. If you could follow the course of making from the draughting-rooms to the finishing-shop, if you could see the process at once as a whole, you would understand that it is all a complete harmony, every part

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

working with every other part to a definite end." It was not I but my friend who had the truth of the matter. Where for me there was only chaos, for him was order. And the difference was that he had the clue which I had not. His sense of the meaning of the parts brought the scattering details into a final unity; and therein he found harmony and satisfaction.

I went away much impressed by what I had seen. When I had collected my wits a little in the comparative calm of the streets, it occurred to me that the immense workshops were a symbol of man's life in the world. In the instant of experience all seems chaos. At close range, in direct contact with the facts and demands of every day, we feel how confusing and distracting it all is. Life is beating in upon us at every point; all our senses are assailed at once. Each new day brings its conflicting interests and obligations. Now, whether we are aware of it or not, our constant effort is, out of the great variety of experience pressing in upon us, to select such details as make to a definite

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

purpose and end. Instinctively we grope toward and attract to us that which is special and proper to our individual development. Our progress is toward harmony. By the adjustment of new material to the shaping principle of our experience, the circle of our individual lives widens its circumference. We are able to bring more and more details into order, and correspondingly fuller and richer our life becomes.

The mental perception of order in the parts gives the whole its significance. This quick grasp of the whole is like the click of the kaleidoscope which throws the tumbling, distorted bits into a design. The conduct of practical life on the mental plane is the process also of art on the plane of the emotions. Not only does experience offer itself to us as the subject of thought ; our contact with the world is also the stimulus of feeling. In my account of the visit to the Locomotive Works I have set down but a part and not the sum of my reaction. After I had come away, I fell to thinking about what I had seen, and intellectually I deduced certain

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

abstract principles with regard to unity and significance. But at the moment of experience itself I simply felt. I was overwhelmed by the sense of unloosened power. The very confusion of it all constituted the unity of impression. The emotion roused in me by the roar and riotous movement and the vast gloom torn by fitful yellow gleams from opened furnaces and shapes of glowing metal was the emotion appropriate to the experience of chaos. That I can find a single word by which to characterize it, is evidence that the moment had its harmony for me and consequent meaning. All the infinite universe external to us is everywhere and at every instant potentially the stimulus to emotion. But unless feeling is discriminated, it passes unregarded. When the emotion gathers itself into design, when the moment reveals within itself order and significance, then and not till then the emotion becomes substance for expression in forms of art.

If I were able to phrase what I saw and what I felt in the Locomotive Works, so that by means of presenting what I saw I might

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

communicate to another what I felt and so rouse in him the same emotion, I should be an artist. Whistler or Monet might picture for us the murk and mystery of this pregnant gloom. Wagner might sound for us the tumultuous, weird emotions of this Niebelungen workshop of the twentieth century. Dante or Milton might phrase this inferno and pandemonium of modern industry and leave us stirred by the sense of power in the play of gigantic forces. Whether the medium be the painter's color, the musician's tones, or the poet's words, the purpose of the representation is fulfilled in so far as the work expresses the emotion which the artist has felt in the presence of this spectacle. He, the artist, more than I or another, has thrilled to its mystery, its tumult, its power. It is this effect, received as a unity of impression, that he wants to communicate. This power of the object over him, and consequently the content of his work, is beauty.

In the experience of us all there are objects and situations which can stir us,—the twilight hour, a group of children at play, the

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

spectacle of the great human crowd, it may be, or solitude under the stars, the works of man as vast cities or cunningly contrived machines, or perhaps it is the mighty, shifting panorama which nature unrolls for us at every instant of day and night, her endless pageant of color and light and shade and form. Out of them at the moment of our contact is unfolded a new significance; because of them life becomes for us larger, deeper. This power possessed by objects to rouse in us an emotion which comes with the realization of inner significance expressed in harmony is beauty. A brief analysis of the nature and action of beauty may help us in the understanding and appreciation of art, though the value to us of any explanation is to quicken us to a more vivid sensitiveness to the effect of beauty in the domain of actual experience of it.

Because the world external to us, which manifests beauty, is received into consciousness by the senses, it is natural to seek our explanation in the processes involved in the functioning of our organism. Our existence

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

as individual human beings is conditioned by our embodiment in matter. Without senses, without nerves and a brain, we should not *be*. Our feelings, which determine for us finally the value of experience, are the product of the excitement of our physical organism responding to stimulation. The rudimentary and most general feelings are pleasure and pain. All the complex and infinitely varied emotions that go to make up our conscious life are modifications of these two elementary reactions. The feeling of pleasure results when our organism "functions harmoniously with itself;" pain is the consequence of discord. In the words of a recent admirable statement of the psychologists' position: "When rhythm and melody and forms and colors give me pleasure, it is because the imitating impulses and movements that have arisen in me are such as suit, help, heighten my physical organization in general and in particular. . . . The basis, in short, of any æsthetic experience — poetry, music, painting and the rest — is beautiful through its harmony with the conditions offered by our

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

senses, primarily of sight and hearing, and through the harmony of the suggestions and impulses it arouses with the whole organism."

Beauty, then, according to the psychologists, is the quality inherent in things, the possession of which enables them to stimulate our organism to harmonious functioning. And the perception of beauty is a purely physiological reaction.

This explanation, valid within its limits, seems to me to fall short of the whole truth. For it fails to reckon with that faculty and that entity within us whose existence we know but cannot explain, — the faculty we call mind, which operates as imagination, and the entity we recognize as spirit or soul. I mean the faculty which gives us the idea of God and the consciousness of self, the faculty which apprehends relations and significance in material transcending their material embodiment. I mean the entity within us which expresses itself in love and aspiration and worship, the entity which is able to fuse with the harmony external to it in a larger unity. When I glance out upon a winter twilight

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

drenching earth and sky with luminous blue, a sudden delight floods in upon me, gathering up all my senses in a surging billow of emotion, and my being pulses and vibrates in a beat of joy. Something within me goes out to meet the landscape ; so far as I am at all conscious of the moment, I feel, There, that is what I am ! This deep harmony of tone and mass is the expression of a fuller self toward which I yearn. My being thrills and dilates with the sensation of larger life. Then, after the joy has throbbed itself out and my reaction takes shape as consciousness, I set myself to consider the sources and the processes of my experience. I note that my eye has perceived color and form. My intellect, as I summon it into action, tells me that I am looking upon a scene in nature composed of material elements, as land and trees and water and atmosphere. My senses, operating through channels of matter, receive, and my brain registers, impressions of material objects. But this analysis, though defining the processes, does not quite explain my *joy*. I know that beyond all this, transcending my

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

material sense-perception and transcending the actual material of the landscape, there is something in me and there is something in nature which meet and mingle and become one. Above all embodiment in matter, there is a plane on which I feel my community with the world external to me, recognizing that world to be an extension of my own personality, a plane on which I can identify myself with the thing outside of me in so far as it is the expression of what I am or may become. Between me and the external world there is a common term. The effect which nature has upon us is determined, not by the object itself alone and not by our individual mind and temperament alone, but by the meeting of the two, the community between the object and the spirit of man. When we find nature significant and expressive, it is because we make nature in some way a part of our own experience.

The material of an object is perceived by the senses. We see that it is blue or green or brown; we may touch it and note that it is rough or smooth, hard or soft, warm or

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

cold. But the expressiveness of the object, its value for the emotions, does not stop with its merely material qualities, but comes with our grasp of the "relations" which it embodies; and these relations, transmitted through material by the senses, are apprehended by the mind. There are, of course, elementary data of sense-perception, such as color and sound. It may be that I prefer red to yellow because my eye is so constituted as to function harmoniously with a rate of vibration represented by 450 billions per second, and discordantly with a rate of vibration represented by 526 billions per second. So also with tones of a given pitch. But though simple color and simple sound have each the power to please the senses, yet in actual experience neither color nor sound is perceived abstractly, apart from its embodiment in form. Color is felt as the property of some concrete object, as the crimson of a rose, the dye of some fabric or garment, the blue of the sky, which, though we know it to be the infinite extension of atmosphere and ether, we nevertheless conceive as a dome, with curvature

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

and the definite boundary of the horizon. Sound in and of itself has pitch and *timbre*, qualities of pure sensation; but even with the perception of sound the element of form enters in, for we hear it with a consciousness of its duration — long or short — or of its relation to other sounds, heard or imagined.

Our perceptions, therefore, give us forms. Now form implies *relation*, the reference of one part to the other parts in the composition of the whole. And relation carries with it the possibilities of harmony or discord, of unity or disorder. Before an object can be regarded as beautiful it must give out a unity of impression. This unity does not reside in the object itself, but is effected by the mind which perceives it. In looking at a checker-board I may see it as an aggregation of white squares set off by black, or as black squares relieved by white. I may read it as a series of horizontals, or of verticals, or of diagonals, according as I *attend* to it. The design of the checker-board is not an absolute and fixed quantity inherent in the object itself, but is

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

capable of a various interpretation according to the relative emphasis given to the parts by the perceiving mind. So with all objects in nature. The twilight landscape which stirred me may have been quite without interest or meaning to the man at my side; or, if he responded to it at all, his feelings may have been of a different order and quality than mine. Where I felt a deep and intimate solemnity in the landscape, he might have received the twilight as chill and forbidding. Beauty, then, which consists in harmonious relation, does not lie in nature objectively, but is constituted by the perception in man's constructive imagination of a harmony and consequent significance drawn out of natural forms. It is, in Emerson's phrase, "the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects." And Emerson says further, "The charming landscape which I saw this morning is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the hori-

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

zon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet." The mere pleasurable excitement of the senses is hardly to be called beauty. An object to be beautiful must express a harmony of relations and hence a meaning,—a meaning which goes beyond sense-perception and does not stop with the intellect, but reaches the spirit. Psychologists tell us that "a curved line is pleasing because the eye is so hung as best to move in it." Pleasing, yes; but not beautiful. And precisely herein is illustrated the distinction. A life wearied with an undulating uniformity of days will find beauty less in the curve than in the zigzag, because the sight of the broken line brings to the spirit suggestions of change and adventure. A supine temper finds shock, excitement, and a meaning in the vertical. Yet the significance of forms is not determined necessarily by contrasts. A quiet spirit sees its own expression, a harmony of self with external form, in the even lines and flat spaces of some Dutch etching. Or a vigorous, hardy mind takes fresh stimulus and courage from the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

swirling clouds of Turner or the wind-torn landscapes of Constable. An object is beautiful, not because of the physical ease with which the eye follows its outlines, but in so far as it has the power to communicate to us the feeling of larger life, to express and complete for us a harmony within our emotional experience.

Our senses report to us the material world; we see, we hear, we touch and taste and smell. But we recognize also that nature has a value for the emotions; it can delight and thrill and uplift, taking us out of ourselves and carrying us beyond the confines of the little circle of our daily use and wont. As I look from my window I see against the sky a pear tree, radiant with blossom, an explosion of light and sensation. Its green and white, steeped in sunshine and quivering out of rain-washed depths of blue, are good to behold. But for me, as my spirit goes out to meet it, the tree is spring! In this I do not mean to characterize a process of intellectual deduction,—that as blossoms come in the spring, so the flowering of the tree is evidence that spring

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

is here. I mean that by its color and form, all its outward loveliness, the tree communicates to me the spirit of the new birth of the year. In myself I feel and live the spring. My joy in the tree, therefore, does not end with the sight of its gray trunk and interwoven branches and its gleaming play of leaves: there my joy only begins, and it comes to its fulfillment as I feel the life of the tree to be an expression and extension of the life that is in me. My physical organism responds harmoniously in rhythm with the form of the tree, and so far the tree is pleasing. But, finally, a form is beautiful because it is expressive. "Beauty," said Millet, "does not consist merely in the shape or coloring of a face. It lies in the general effect of the form, in suitable and appropriate action. . . . When I paint a mother, I shall try and make her beautiful simply by the look she bends upon her child. Beauty is expression." Beauty works its effect through significance, a significance which is not always to be phrased in words, but is felt; conveyed by the senses, it at last reaches the emotions. Where the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

spirit of man comes into harmony with a harmony external to it, there is beauty.

The elements of beauty are design, wholeness, and significance. Significance proceeds out of wholeness or unity of impression; and unity is made possible by design. Whatever the flower into which it may ultimately expand, beauty has its roots in fitness and utility; design in this case is constituted by the adaptation of the means to the end. The owner of a saw-mill wanted a support made for a shafting. Indicating a general idea of what he desired, he applied to one of his workmen, a man of intelligence and skill in his craft, but without a conventional education. The man constructed the support, a triangular framework contrived to receive the shafting at the apex; where there was no stress within the triangle, he cut away the timber, thus eliminating all surplusage of material. When the owner saw the finished product he said to his workman, "Well, John, that is a really beautiful thing you have made there." And the man replied, "I don't know anything about the beauty of

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

it, but I know it's strong!" The end to be reached was a support which should be strong. The strong support was felt to be beautiful, for its lines and masses were apprehended as *right*. Had the man, with the "little learning" that is dangerous, attempted embellishment or applied ornament, he would have spoiled the effect; for ornateness would have been out of place. The perfect fitness of means to end, without defect and without excess, constituted its beauty; and its beauty was perceived æsthetically, as a quality inherent in the form, a quality which apart from the practical serviceableness of the contrivance was capable of communicating pleasure. So in general, when the inherent needs of the work give shape to the structure or contrivance, the resulting form is in so far forth beautiful. The early "horseless carriages," in which a form intended for one use was grafted upon a different purpose, were very ugly. To-day the motor-car, evolved out of structural needs, a thing complete in and for itself, has in its lines and coherence of composition certain elements of beauty. In his "Song of Speed,"

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

Henley has demonstrated that the motor-car, mechanical, modern, useful, may even be material for poetry. That the useful is not always perceived as beautiful is due to the fact that the design which has shaped the work must be regarded apart from the material serviceableness of the object itself. Beauty consists not in the actual material, but in the unity of relations which the object embodies. We appreciate the art involved in the making of the first lock and key only as we look beyond the merely practical usefulness of the device and so apprehend the harmony of relations effected through its construction. As the lock and key serve to fasten the door, they are useful; they are beautiful as they manifest design and we feel their harmony. Beauty is removed from practical life, not because it is unrelated to life, — just the reverse of that is true, — but because the enjoyment of beauty is disinterested. The detachment involved in appreciation is a detachment from material. The appreciator may seem to be a looker-on at life, in that he does not act but simply feels. But his spirit is correspondingly alert.

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

In the measure that he is released from servitude to material he gives free play to his emotion.

Although beauty is founded upon design, design is not the whole of beauty. Not all objects which exhibit equal integrity of design are equally beautiful. The beauty of a work of art is determined by the degree of emotion which impelled its creation and by the degree in which the work itself is able to communicate the emotion immediately. The feeling which entered into the making of the first lock and key was simply the inventor's desire for such a device, his desire being the feeling which accompanied his consciousness of his need. At the other extreme is the emotion such as attended Michelangelo's vision of his "David" and urged his hand as he set his chisel to the unshaped waiting block. And so all the way between. Many pictures are executed in a wholly mechanical spirit, as so much manufacture; and they exhibit correspondingly little beauty. Many useful things, as a candle-stick, a pair of andirons, a chair, are wrought in the spirit

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

of art; into them goes something of the maker's joy in his work; they become the expression of his emotion: and they are so far beautiful. It is asserted that Millet's "Angelus" is a greater picture than the painting entitled "War" by Franz Stuck, because "the idea of peasants telling their beads is more beautiful than the idea of a ruthless destroyer only in so far as it is morally higher." The moral value as such has very little to do with it. It is a question of emotion. If Stuck were to put on canvas his idea of peasants at prayer and if Millet had phrased in pictorial terms his feeling about war, there is little doubt that Millet's painting would be the more telling and beautiful. The degree of beauty is fixed by the depth of the man's insight into life and the corresponding intensity of his emotion.

Beauty is not limited to one class of object or experience and excluded from another. A chair may be beautiful, although turned to common use; a picture is not beautiful necessarily because it is a picture. "Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

place is bad," says Whitman. Whistler speaks of art as "seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest, Rembrandt, when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks." The beautiful must exhibit an integrity of relations within itself, and it must be in integral relation with its surroundings. The standard of beauty varies with every age, with every nation, indeed with every individual. As beauty is not in the object itself, but is in the mind which integrates the relations which the object manifests, so our appreciation of beauty is determined by our individuality. And individuality is the resultant of many forces. The self, inexplicable in essence, is the product of inheritance, and is modified by environment and training. More than we realize, our judgment is qualified by tradition and habit and even fashion. Because men have been familiar for so many centuries with the idea that sculpture should find its vehicle in white marble, the know-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ledge that Greek marbles originally were painted comes with something of a shock ; and for the moment they have difficulty in persuading themselves that a Parthenon frieze *colored* could possibly be beautiful. Until within comparatively recent years the French have regarded Shakespeare as a barbarian. The heroic couplet, which was the last word in poetical expression in the age of Queen Anne, we consider to-day as little more than a mechanical jingle. Last year's fashions in dress, which seemed at the time to have their merits, are this year amusingly grotesque. In our judgment of beauty, therefore, allowance must be made for standards which merely are imposed upon us from without. It is necessary to distinguish between a formula and the reality. As far as possible we should seek to come into "original relation" with the universe, freshly for ourselves. So we must return upon our individual consciousness, and thus determine what is vitally significant to us. For the man who would appreciate beauty, it is not a question between this or that "school" in art, whether the

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

truth lies with the classicists or the romanticists; it is not a question of this or that subject or method to the exclusion of all others. Beauty may be anywhere or everywhere. It is our task and joy to find it, wherever it may be. And we shall find it, if we are able to recognize it and we hold ourselves responsive to its multitudinous appeal.

The conception of beauty which limits its manifestation to one kind of experience is so far false and leads to mischievous acceptances and narrowing rejections. We mistake the pretty for the beautiful and so fail of the true value of beauty; we are blind to the significance which all nature and all life, in the lowest and commonest as in the highest and rarest, hold within them. "If beauty," says Hamerton, "were the only province of art, neither painters nor etchers would find anything to occupy them in the foul stream that washes the London wharfs." By beauty here is meant the merely agreeable. Pleasing the river may not be, to the ordinary man; but for the poet and the painter, those to whom it is given to see with the inner eye,

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

the "foul stream" and its wharfs may be lighted with mysterious and tender beauty.

"Earth has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning.

.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !"

And Whistler, by the witchery of his brush and his needle, has transmuted the confusion and sordidness and filth of this Thames-side into exquisite emotion. The essence of beauty is harmony, but that harmony is not to be reduced to rule and measure. In the very chaos of the Locomotive Works we may feel beauty ; in the thrill which they communicate we receive access of power and we *are*, more largely, more universally. The harmony which is beauty is that unity or integ-

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

urity of impression by force of which we are able to feel significance and the relation of the object to our own experience. It is an error to suppose that beauty must be racked on a procrustean bed of formula. Such false conceptions result in sham art. To create a work which shall be beautiful it is not necessary to "smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit." Beauty is not imposed upon material from without, according to a recipe; it is drawn out from within by the integrating power of imagination. Art is not artificiality. Art is the expression of vital emotion and essential significance. The beauty of architecture, for example, consists not in applied ornament but in structural fitness and adaptability, and grows out of the inherent needs of the work. The cathedral-builders of old time did not set themselves to create a "work of art." They wanted a church; and it was a church they built. It is we who, perceiving the rightness of their achievement, pronounce it to be beautiful. Beauty is not manufactured, but grows; it cannot be laid on as ornament. Beauty is born out of the contact of the spirit

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

of man with natural forms, that contact which gives to objects their significance.

The recognition of the true nature of beauty may change for us the face of the world. Some things are universally regarded as beautiful because their appeal is universal. There are passions, joys, aspirations, common to all the race; and the forms which objectify these emotions are beautiful universally. We can all enter into the feelings that gather about a group of children dancing round a Maypole in the Park; but in the murk and din and demoniacal activity of the Locomotive Works the appeal is not so obvious. The stupendous workshops become beautiful to me as my being merges into harmony with them and dilates with the emotion of intenser and fuller life. The Sistine Madonna is generally regarded as beautiful. But what is the beauty in the unspeakable witch on the canvas of Frans Hals? Harmony of color and of composition is employed by Raphael in the rendering of a figure and in the expression of an emotion both of which relate themselves to the veneration

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

of mankind. Maternity, Christian or pagan, divine or human, evokes its universal tribute of feeling. On Raphael's canvas complete harmony is made visible ; and the beauty of the picture for us is measured by its power to stir us. In the painting by Frans Hals the subject represented is in itself not pleasing. The technical execution of the picture is masterly. But our delight goes beyond any enjoyment of the skill here exhibited, goes beyond even the satisfaction of the senses in its color and composition. What the picture expresses is not merely the visible aspect of this woman, but the painter's own sympathy and appreciation. He saw a beauty in ugliness, a beauty to which we were blind, for he felt the significance of her life, the eternal rightness to herself of what she was. His joy in this inner harmony has transfigured the object and made it beautiful. Beauty penetrates deeper than grace and comeliness ; it is not confined to the pretty and agreeable. Indeed, beauty is not always immediately pleasant, but is received often with pain. The emotion of pleasure, which is regarded as the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

necessary concomitant of beauty, ensues as we are able to merge ourselves in the experience and so come to feel its ultimate harmony. What is commonly accepted as ugly, as shocking or sordid, becomes beautiful for us so soon as we apprehend its inner significance. Judged by the canons of formal beauty, the sky-line of New York city, seen from the North River, is ugly and distressing. But the responsive spirit, reaching ever outward into new forms of feeling, can thrill at sight of those Titanic structures out-topping the Palisades themselves, thrusting their squareness adventurously into the smoke-grayed air, and telling the triumph of man's mind over the forces of nature in this fulfillment of the needs of irrepressible activity, this expression of tremendous actuality and life. Not that the reaction is so definitely formulated in the moment of experience ; but this is something of what is felt. The discovery of such a harmony is the entrance into fuller living. So it is that the boundaries of beauty enlarge with the expansion of the individual spirit.

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

To extend the boundaries of beauty by the revelation of new harmonies is the function of art. With the ordinary man, the plane of feeling, which is the basis of appreciation, is below the plane of his attention as he moves through life from day to day. As a clock may be ticking in the room quite unheeded, and then suddenly we hear it because our attention is called to it; so only that emotion really counts to us as experience which comes to our cognizance. When once the ordinary man is made aware of the underlying plane of feeling, the whole realm of appreciation is opened to him by his recognition of the possibilities of beauty which life may hold. Consciously to recognize that forces are operating which lie behind the surface aspect of things is to open ourselves to the play of these forces. With persons in whom intellect is dominant and the controlling power, the primary need is to understand; and for such, first to know is to be helped finally to feel. To comprehend that there is a soul in every fact and that within material objects reside meanings for the spirit, or beauty, is to be

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

made more sensitive to their influence. With the artist, however, the case is different. At the moment of creation he is little conscious of the purport of the work to which he sets his hand. He is not concerned, as we have been, with the "why" of beauty; from the concrete directly to the concrete is his progress. Life comes to him not as thought but as emotion. He is moved by actual immediate contact with the world about him,—by the sight of a landscape, by the mood of an hour or place, by the power of some personality; it may be, too, a welter of recollected sensations and impressions that plays upon his spirit. The resultant emotion, not reasoned about but nevertheless directed to a definite end, takes shape in external concrete forms which are works of art. Just because he is so quick to feel the emotional value of life he is an artist; and much of his power as an artist derives from the concreteness of his emotion. The artist is the creative mind, creative in this sense, that in the outward shows of things he feels their inward and true relations, and by new combinations

BEAUTY AND COMMON LIFE

of material elements he reëmbodies his feeling in forms whose message is addressed to the spirit. The reason why Millet painted the "Sower" was that he felt the beauty of this peasant figure interpreted as significance and life. And it is this significance and life, in which we are made to share, that his picture is designed to express.

Experience comes to us in fragments; the surface of the world throws back to us but broken glimpses. In the perspective of a lifetime the fragments flow together into order, and we dimly see the purpose of our being here; in moments of illumination and deeper insight a glimpse may disclose a sudden harmony, and the brief segment of nature's circle becomes beautiful. For then is revealed the shaping principle. Within the fact, behind the surface, are apprehended the relations of which the fact and the surface are the expression. The rhythm thus discovered wakens an accordant rhythm in the spirit of man. The moment gives out its meaning as man and nature merge together in the inclusive harmony. If the human

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

spirit were infinite in comprehension, we should receive all things as beautiful, for we should apprehend their rightness and their harmony. To our finite perception, however, design is not always evident, for it is overlaid and confounded with other elements which are not at the moment fused. Just here is the office of art. For art presents a harmony liberated from all admixture of conflicting details and purged of all accidents, thus rendering the single meaning salient. To compel disorder into order and so reveal new beauty is the achievement of the artist. The world is commonplace or fraught with divinest meanings, according as we see it so. To art we turn for revelation, knowing that ideals of beauty may be many and that beauty may manifest itself in many forms.

VIII

THE ARTS OF FORM

THE maker of the first bowl moulds the plastic clay into the shape best adapted to its purpose, a vessel to hold water, from which he can drink easily ; the half-globe rather than the cube affords the greatest holding capacity with the least expenditure of material. He finds now that the form itself — over and above the practical serviceableness of the bowl — gives him pleasure. With a pointed stick or bit of flint he traces in the yielding surface a flowing line or an ordered series of dots or crosses, allowing free play to his fancy and invention. The design does not resemble anything else, nor does it relate itself to any object external to the maker ; it has no meaning apart from the pleasure which it gave him as he conceived and traced it, and the pleasure it now

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

gives him to look at it. To another man who sees the bowl, its form and its decoration afford likewise a double pleasure: there is first the satisfaction of senses and mind in the contemplation of harmonious form and rhythmic pattern; and second, there is communicated to him a feeling of the maker's delight in his handiwork, and sympathetically and imaginatively the beholder realizes that delight in his own experience.

I am walking with a friend along a road which climbs a wooded hillside. A few steps bring us to the top and the edge of a clearing. There, suddenly a sweep of country is rolled out before us. A quick intake of the breath, and then the cry, "Ah!" Consciousness surges back over me, and turning to my friend, I exclaim, "See the line of those hills over there across the tender sky and those clouds tumbling above them; see how the hills dip down into the meadows; look at the lovely group of willows along the bank of the river, how graciously they come in, and then that wash of purple light over everything!" My simple cry,

THE ARTS OF FORM

“Ah,” was the expression of emotion, the unconscious, involuntary expression; it was not art. It did not formulate my emotion definitely, and although it was an expression of emotion, it had no power to communicate the special quality of it. So soon, however, as I composed the elements in the landscape, which stimulated my emotion, into a distinct and coherent whole and by means of that I tried to convey to my friend something of what I was feeling, my expression tended to become art. My medium of expression happened to be words. If I had been alone and wanted to take home with me a record of my impression of the landscape, a pencil-sketch of the little composition might have served to indicate the sources of my feeling and to suggest its quality. Whether in words or in line and mass, my work would be in a rudimentary form a work of representative art. The objective fact of the landscape which I point out to my friend engages his interest; his pleasure derives from those aspects of it which my emotion emphasizes and which constitute

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

its beauty ; and something of the same emotion that I felt he realizes in his own experience.

The impulse to expression which fulfills itself in a work of art is directed in general by one of two motives, — the motive of representation and the motive of pure form. These two motives are coexistent with human activity itself. The earliest vestiges of prehistoric races and the remains of the remotest civilizations are witnesses of man's desire to imitate and record, and also of his pleasure in harmony of form. Certain caves in France, inhabited by man some thousands of years before history begins, have yielded up reindeer horns and bones, carved with reliefs and engraved with drawings of mammoths, reindeer, and fish. On the walls and roofs of these caves are paintings in bright colors of animals, rendered with correctness and animation. Flint axes of a still remoter epoch "are carved with great dexterity by means of small chips flaked off the stone, and show a regularity of outline which testifies to the delight of primitive man in sym-

THE ARTS OF FORM

metry.”¹ Burial mounds, of unknown antiquity, and the rude stone monuments such as Stonehenge and the dolmens of Brittany and Wales, emerging out of prehistoric dawns, are evidence of man’s striving after architectural unity in design and harmony of proportion.

The existence of these two separate motives which impel creation, man’s desire to imitate and his delight in harmony, gives rise to a division of the arts into two general classes, namely, the representative arts and the arts of pure form. The representative arts comprise painting and sculpture, and literature in its manifestations of the drama, fiction, and dramatic and descriptive poetry. These arts draw their subjects from nature and human life, from the world external to the artist. The arts of form comprise architecture and music, and that limitless range of human activities in design and pattern-making for embellishment — including also the whole category of “useful arts” — which may be

¹ S. Reinach, *The Story of Art throughout the Ages*, chapter i.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

subsumed under the comprehensive term *decoration*. In these arts the "subject" is self-constituted and does not derive its significance from its likeness to any object external to it; the form itself is the subject. Lyric poetry stands midway between the two classes. It is the expression of "inner states," but it externalizes itself in terms of the outer world. It has a core of thought, and it employs images from nature which can be visualized, and it recalls sounds whose echo can be wakened in imaginative memory.

"Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoëbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise!
Arise, arise!"

The intellectual and sensuous elements which lyric poetry embodies are finally submerged under the waves of emotional stimulus which flow from the form as form. Such poetry does

THE ARTS OF FORM

not depend upon the fact of representation for its meaning ; the very form itself, as in music, is its medium of communicating the emotion. Art, therefore, to phrase the same matter in slightly different terms, has a subjective and an objective aspect. In the one case, the artist projects his feeling into the forms which he himself creates ; in the other case, the forms external to him, as nature and human life, inspire the emotion, and these external forms the artist reproduces, with of course the necessary modifications, as the symbol and means of expression of his emotion.

The distinction between the representative arts and the arts of form is not ultimate, nor does it exclude one class wholly from the other ; it defines a general tendency and serves to mark certain differences in original motive and in the way in which the two kinds of work may be received and appreciated. In actual works of art themselves, though they differ as to origin and function, the line of division cannot be sharply drawn. The dance may be an art of form or a representa-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

tive art according as it embodies the rhythms of pure movement or as it mimetically figures forth dramatic ideas. Painting, as in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel and the wall paintings of Tintoretto and Veronese in the Ducal Palace of Venice, may be employed in the service of decoration. Decoration, as in architectural sculpture and in patterns for carpets and wall-coverings, often draws its motives from nature, such as leaves, flowers, fruits, and animals; but when the function of the work is decorative and not representative, the naturalistic and graphic character of the subject is subordinated to the purposes of abstract and formal design. A picture, on the other hand, which is frankly representative in purpose, must submit its composition and color-harmony to the requirements of unity in design; in a sense it must make a pattern. And a statue, as the "Victory of Samothrace," bases its ultimate appeal, not upon the fact of representation, but upon complete, rhythmic, beautiful form.

To the appreciator the arts of form carry a twofold significance. There is first the

THE ARTS OF FORM

pleasure which derives from the contemplation and reception of a harmony of pure form, including harmony of color, of line, and of flat design as well as form in the round, a pleasure of the senses and the mind. Second, works of art in this category, as they are the expression for the artist of his emotion, become therefore the manifestation to the appreciator and means of communication of that emotion.

Man's delight in order, in unity, in harmony, rhythm, and balance, is inborn. The possession of these qualities by an object constitutes its form. Form, in the sense of unity and totality of relations, is not to be confounded with mere regularity. It may assume all degrees of divergence from geometric precision, all degrees of variety, ranging from the visual perfectness of the Parthenon to the sublime and triumphant inconsequence of the sky-line of New York city. It may manifest all degrees of complexity from a cup to a cathedral or from "Home, Sweet Home" to Tschaikowski's "Pathetic Symphony." Whatever the ele-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

ments and the incidents, our sense of order in the parts and of singleness of impression endows the object with its form. The form as we apprehend it of an object constitutes its beauty, its capability to arouse and to delight.

Because of the essential make-up of man's mind and spirit, powers that are innate and determined by forces still beyond the scope of analysis, the perception of a harmony of relations, which is beauty, is attended with pleasure, a pleasure that is felt and cannot be explained. This inborn, inexplicable delight is at once the origin of the arts of form and the basis of our appreciation. Each art, as the fashioning of objects of use, as decoration, architecture, and music, is governed by its own intrinsic, inherent laws and rests its appeal upon man's pleasure in form. There is no standard external to the laws of the art itself by which to judge the rightness and the beauty of the individual work. In the arts of use and in decoration and architecture, the beauty of a work, as the beauty of a chair, as in the ordering and appointments of a

THE ARTS OF FORM

room, as the beauty of a temple, a theatre, a dwelling, derives primarily from the fitness of the object to its function, and finally from the rhythm of its lines and the harmony of its masses and proportions, — its total form. A chair which cannot be sat in may be interesting and agreeable to look at, but it is not truly beautiful ; for then it is not a chair but a curiosity, a bijou, and a superfluity ; to be beautiful it must be first of all frankly and practically a chair. A living-room which cannot be lived in with comfort and restfulness and peace of mind is not a living-room, but a museum or a concentrated department store ; at best it is only an inclosed space. A beautiful building declares its function and use, satisfies us with the logic and coherence of its parts, and delights us with its reticence or its boldness, its simplicity or its inventiveness, in fine, its personality, as expressed in its parts and their confluence into an ordered, self-contained, and self-sufficing whole. Music, using sound for its material, is a pattern-weaving in tones. The power of music to satisfy and delight resides

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

in the sensuous value of its material and in the character of its pattern as form, the balance and contrast of tonal relations, the folding and unfolding of themes, their development and progress to the final compelling unity-in-variety which constitutes its form and which in its own inherent and self-sufficing way is made the expression of the composer's emotion and musical idea. Lyric poetry is the fitting of rhythmic, melodious, colored words to the emotion within, to the point where the very form itself becomes the meaning, and the essence and mystery of the song are in the singing. Beauty is harmony materialized; it is emotion ordered and made visible, audible, tangible. If in the arts of form we seek further a standard of truth, their truth is not found in their relation to any external verity, but is determined by their correspondence with inner experience.

In the category of the arts of form the single work is to be received in its entirety and integrity as form. The whole, however, may be resolved into its parts, and the individual

THE ARTS OF FORM

details may be interesting in themselves. Thus into decorative patterns are introduced elements of meaning which attach themselves to the world and experience external to the artist. Many ornamental motives, like the zigzag and the egg-and-dart, for example, had originally a symbolic value. Sometimes they are drawn from primitive structures and fabrics, as the checker-board pattern, with its likeness to the platings of rush mattings, and the volute and spiral ornaments, which recall the curves and involutions of wattle and wicker work. Again, decoration may employ in its service details that in themselves are genuinely representative art. The frieze of the Parthenon shows in relief a procession of men and women and horses and chariots and animals. The sculptures of Gothic churches represent men and women, and the carvings of mouldings, capitals, and traceries are based on naturalistic motives, taking their designs from leaves and flowers. The essential function of ornament is to emphasize form and not to obscure it, though nowadays in machine-made things a kind of pseudo-embellishment

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

is laid on to distract attention from the badness and meaninglessness of the form; in true decoration the representative elements are subordinated to the formal character of the whole. The representative interest may be enjoyed separately and in detail; but finally the graphic purpose yields to the decorative, and the details take their place as parts of the total design. Thus a Gothic cathedral conveys its complete and true impression first and last as form. Midway we may set ourselves to a reading of the details. The figure of this saint on the jamb or the archivolt of the portal is expressive of such simple piety and enthusiasm! In this group on the tympanum what animation and spirit! This moulding of leaves and blossoms is cut with such loving fidelity and exquisite feeling for natural truth! But at the last the separate members fulfill their appointed office as they reveal the supreme function of the living total form.

Music, too, in some of its manifestations, as in song, the opera, and programme music, has a representative and illustrative charac-

THE ARTS OF FORM

ter. In Chopin's "Funeral March" we hear the tolling of church bells, and it is easy to visualize the slow, straggling file of mourners following the bier; the composition here has a definite objective base drawn from external fact, and the "idea" is not exclusively musical, but admits an infusion of pictorial and literary elements. In listening to the love duet of the second act of "Tristan," although the lovers are before us in actual presence on the stage, I find myself involuntarily closing my eyes, for the music is so personal and so spiritualized, it is in and of itself so intensely the realization of the emotion, that the objective presentment of it by the actors becomes unnecessary and is almost an intrusion. The representative, figurative element in music may be an added interest, but its appeal is intellectual; if as we hear the "Funeral March," we say to ourselves, This is so and so, and, Here they do this or that, we are thinking rather than feeling. Music is the immediate expression of emotion communicated immediately; and the composition will not perfectly satisfy unless it is *music*, compelling all

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

relations of melody, harmony, and rhythm into a supreme and triumphant order.

Whereas the representative arts are based upon objective fact, drawing their "subjects" from nature and life external to the artist; in decoration, in architecture, and in music the artist creates his own forms as the projection of his emotion and the means of its expression. Richard Wagner, referring to the composition of his "Tristan," writes: "Here, in perfect trustfulness, I plunged into the inner depth of soul events, and from out this inmost centre of the world I fearlessly built up its outer form. . . . Life and death, the whole import and existence of the outer world, here hang on nothing but the inner movements of the soul. The whole affecting Action comes about for the reason only that the inmost soul demands it, and steps to light with the very shape foretokened in the inner shrine." The form, thus self-constituted, has the power to delight us, and the work is at the same time the expression of emotion. The arts of form please us with the pleasure that attends the perception of

THE ARTS OF FORM

formal beauty ; but this pleasure does not exhaust their capability to minister to us. What differentiates art from manufacture is the element of personal expression. Born out of need, whether the need be physical or spiritual, fulfilling the urge to expression, a work of art embodies its maker's delight in creating. Correspondingly, beyond our immediate enjoyment of the work as form, we feel something of what the man felt who was impelled to create it. His handiwork, his pattern, his composition, becomes the means of communicating to us his emotional experience.

Obviously the significance of any work is determined primarily by the intensity and scope of emotion which has prompted it. The creation of works of art involves all degrees of intention, from the hut in the wilderness rudely thrown together, whose purpose was shelter, to a Gothic cathedral, in its multitudinousness eloquent of man's worship and aspiration. The man who moulded the first bowl, adapting its form as closely as possible to its use and shaping its proportions

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

for his own pleasure to satisfy his sense of harmony and rhythm, differs from the builders of the Parthenon only in the degree of intensity of his inspiring emotion and in the measure of his controlling thought. The beauty of accomplished form of cathedral and of temple is compelling ; and we may forget that they rose out of need. Both hut and bowl are immediately useful, and their beauty is not so evident, — that little touch of feeling which wakens a response in us. But in their adaptation to their function they become significant ; the satisfaction which accompanies expression is communicated to us as we apprehend in the work the creator's intention and we realize in ourselves what the creation of it meant to him as the fulfillment of his need and the utterance of his emotion.

So the expressive power of an individual work is conditioned originally by the amount of feeling that enters into the making of it. Every phrase of a Beethoven symphony is saturated with emotion, and the work leads us into depths and up to heights

THE ARTS OF FORM

of universal experience, disclosing to us tortuous ways and infinite vistas of the possibilities of human feeling. A simple earthen jug may bear the impress of loving fingers, and the crudely turned form may be eloquent of the caress of its maker. So we come to value even in the humblest objects of use this autographic character, which is the gate of entrance into the experience of the men who fashioned them. Every maker strives toward perfection, the completest realization of his ideal within his power of execution. But the very shortcomings of his work are significant as expressive of what he felt and was groping after; they are so significant that by a curious perversion, machinery, which in our civilized day has supplanted the craftsman, tries by mechanical means to reproduce the roughness and supposed imperfections of hand work. Music is the consummate art, in which the form and the content are one and inextricable; its medium is the purest, least alloyed means of expression of instant emotion. Architecture, in its harmonies and rhythms, the gathering

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

up of details into the balanced and perfect whole, partakes of the nature of music. But the arts of use and decoration also have their message for the spirit. There is no object fashioned by the hand of man so humble that it may not embody a true thought and a sincere delight. There is no pattern or design so simple and so crude that it may not be the overflow of some human spirit, a mind and heart touched to expression.

IX

REPRESENTATION

BEFORE me is a little bowl of old Satsuma. As I look at it there wakens in me a responsive rhythm, and involuntarily my fingers move as if to caress its suave and lovely lines. The rich gold and mingled mellow browns of its surface pattern intricately woven are a gracious harmony and a delight. Gradually, as I continue to look on it, a feeling is communicated to me of the maker's own joy in his work; and the bowl, its harmonies and rhythms, and all that it expresses, become part of me. There it is, complete in itself, gathering up and containing within itself the entire experience. My thoughts, sensations, feelings do not go beyond the bowl.

Another time I am standing in the hall of the Academy in Florence. At the end of the corridor towers a superb form. I see that it

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

is the figure of a youth. His left hand holds a sling drawn across his shoulder ; his right arm hangs by his side, his hand grasping a pebble close to his thigh ; calm and confident, his head erect, his strength held in leash waiting to be loosed, he fronts the oncoming of the foe. The statue is the presentation of noble form, and it wakens in me an accordant rhythm ; I feel in myself something of what youthful courage, life, and conscious power mean. But my experience does not stop there. The statue is not only presentation but representation. It figures forth a youth, David, the Hebrew shepherd-boy, and he stands awaiting the Philistine. I have read his story, I have my own mental image of him, and about his personality cluster many thoughts. To what Michelangelo shows me I add what I already know. Recognition, memory, knowledge, facts and ideas, a whole store of associations allied with my previous experience, mingle with my instant emotion in its presence. The sculptor, unlike the potter, has not created his own form ; the subject of his work exists outside of him in

REPRESENTATION

nature. He uses the subject for his own ends, but in his treatment of it he is bound by certain responsibilities to external truth. His work as it stands is not completely self-contained, but is linked with the outer world; and my appreciation of it is affected by this reference to extrinsic fact.

An artist is interested in some scene in nature or a personality or situation in human life; it moves him. As the object external to him is the stimulus of his emotion and is associated with it, so he uses the object as the symbol of his experience and means of expression of his emotion. Here, then, the feeling, to express which the work is created, gathers about a subject, which can be recognized intellectually, and the fact of the subject is received as in a measure separate from the feeling which flows from it. In a painting of a landscape, we recognize as the basis of the total experience the fact that it is a landscape, so much water and field and sky; and then we yield ourselves to the *beauty* of the landscape, the emotion with which the artist suffuses the material objects and so trans-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

figures them. Into representative art, therefore, there enters an element not shared by the arts of pure form, the element of the *subject*, carrying with it considerations of objective truth and of likeness to external fact. Toward the understanding of the total scope of a picture or a statue, and by inference and application of the principles, toward the understanding of literature as well, it may help us if we determine the relation of beauty to truth and the function and value of the subject in representative art.

The final significance of a work of art is beauty, received as emotional experience. Nature becomes beautiful to us at the point where it manifests a harmony to which we feel ourselves attuned. At the moment of enjoyment we unconsciously project our personality into this harmony outside of us, identifying ourselves with it and finding it at that instant the expression of something toward which we reach and aspire. When we come consciously to reason about our experience, we see that the harmony external to us which we feel as the extension of ourselves does not

REPRESENTATION

stop with the actual material itself of nature, but emanates from it as the expression of nature's spirit. The harmony is a harmony of relations, made visible through material, and significant to us and beautiful in the measure that we respond to it.

It is the beauty of the object, its significance for the spirit, that primarily moves the artist to expression. Why one landscape and not another impels him to render it upon his canvas is not to be explained. This impulse to immediate and concrete utterance is inspiration. And inspiration would seem to be a confluence of forces outside of the individual consciousness or will, focused at the instant into desire, which becomes the urge to creation. "The mind in creation," says Shelley, "is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power rises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure." The artist does

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

not say, "Lo, I will paint a landscape; let me find my subject!" The subject presents itself. There it is, by chance almost, — a sudden harmony before him, long low meadows stretching away to the dark hills, the late sun striking on the water, gold and green melting into a suffusing flush of purple light, a harmony of color and line and mass which his spirit leaps out to meet and with which it fuses in a larger unity. In the moment of contact all consciousness of self as a separate individuality is lost. Out of the union of the two principles, the spirit of man and the beauty of the object, is born the *idea*, which is to come to expression as a work of art.

But the artist is a mind as well as a temperament. Experience is a swing of the pendulum between the momentary ecstasy of immediate contact and the subsequent reaction upon the moment, which is consciousness of it. In order to make his vision actual, the artist rises out of the domain of feeling into that of thought. The landscape has compelled him; it is now he who must

REPRESENTATION

compel the landscape. To the shaping of his work he must bring to bear all his conscious power of selection and organization and all his knowledge of the capabilities and resources of his means. Art springs out of emotion ; painting is a science. The artist's command of his subject as the symbol of his idea derives from the stern and vigorous exercise of mind. The rightness of his composition is determined by a logic more flexible, perhaps, but no less exacting than the laws of geometry. By the flow of his line and the disposition of his masses, the artist must carry the eye of the beholder along the way he wants it to travel until it rests upon the point where he wants it to rest. There must be no leaks and no false directions ; there must be the cosmos within the frame and nothing outside of it. The principles of perspective have been worked out with a precision that entitles them to rank as a science. Color has its laws, which, again, science is able to formulate. These processes and formulas and laws are not the whole of art, but they have their place.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

The power to feel, the imaginative vision, and creative insight are not to be explained. But knowledge too, acquired learning and skill, plays its part, and to recognize its function and service is to be helped to a fuller understanding of the achievement of the artist.

Gifted with a vibrant, sensitive temperament, endowed with discriminating and organizing power of mind, equipped with a knowledge of the science and the mechanics of his craft, and trained to skill in manual execution, the artist responds to the impulse of his inspiration. His subject is before him. But what is his subject? A scene in nature furnishes him the objective base of his picture, but properly his work is the expression of what he feels. A storm may convey to different men entirely different impressions. In its presence one man may feel himself overwhelmed with terror. These wild, black skies piling in upon him, the hilltops that seem to race through the clouds, the swaying, snapping trees, the earth caught up in the mad grasp of the tempest, may smite

REPRESENTATION

his soul with the pitilessness of nature and her inexorable blind power. Another thrills with joy in this cosmic struggle, the joy of conflict which he has known in his own life, the meeting of equal forces in fair fight, where the issue is still doubtful and victory will fall at last upon the strong, though it is not the final triumph but the present struggle that makes the joy. In rendering the "subject" upon his canvas, by the manipulation of composition and line and mass and color, he makes the storm ominous and terrible, or glorious, according as he feels. The import of his picture is not the natural fact of the storm itself, but its significance for the emotions.

A work of representative art is the rendering of a unity of impression and harmony of relations which the artist has perceived and to which he has thrilled in the world external to him. He presents not the facts themselves but their spirit, that something which endows the facts with their significance and their power to stir him. As the meaning of nature to the beholder is determined by the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

effect it produces on his mind and temperament, so the artist, in the expression of this meaning, aims less at a statement of objective accuracy of exterior appearance than at producing a certain effect, the effect which is the equivalent of the meaning of nature to him. Thus the painter who sees beyond the merely intellectual and sensuous appeal of his subject and enters into its spirit, tries to render on his canvas, not the actual color of nature, but the sensation of color and its value for the emotions. With the material splendor of nature, — her inexhaustible lavish wealth of color, the glory of life which throbs through creation, the mystery of actual movement, — art cannot compete. For the hues and tones of nature, infinite in number and subtlety, the painter has only the few notes within the poor gamut of his palette. How can he quicken his dull paint with the life-beat of palpitating flesh, or the sculptor animate the rigid marble with the vibrations of vivid motion? But where nature is infinite in her range she is also scattering in her effects. By the concentration of divergent forces, art gains in

REPRESENTATION

intensity and directness of impression what it sacrifices in the scope of its material. Michelangelo uses as his subject David, the shepherd-boy; but the person, the mere name, does not signify. What his work embodies is triumphant youth, made visible and communicable. When Millet shows us the peasant, it is not what the peasant is feeling that the artist represents, but what Millet felt about him. The same landscape will be rendered differently by different men. Each selects his details according to the interest of his eye and mind and feeling, and he brings them into a dominant harmony which stands to him for the meaning of the landscape. None of the pictures is an accurate statement of the facts as they are, off there in nature; all are true to the integrating inner vision. The superficial observer sees only the accidents, and he does not distinguish relative importance. The artist, with quicker sensibilities and a trained mind, analyzes, discovers the underlying principle, and then makes a synthesis which embodies only the essential; he seizes the distinctive aspect of the object and makes

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

it salient. There may be, of course, purely descriptive representation, which is a faithful record of the facts of appearance as the painter sees them, without any feeling toward them ; here he works as a scientist, not as an artist. Merely imitative painting falls short of artistic significance, for it embodies no meaning beyond the external fact. It is the expressiveness of the object that the true artist cares to represent ; it is its expressiveness, its value for the emotions, that constitutes its beauty.

To achieve beauty the representative artist bases his work upon the truth of nature. It is nature that supplies him with his motive, — some glimpse, some fragment, which reveals within itself a harmony. It may be a form, as a tree, a man, a mountain range, the race of clouds across the sky ; it may be a color-harmony or “arrangement,” in which color rather than form is the dominant interest, as with a landscape or an interior ; it may be the effects of light, as the sunshine playing over golden haystacks, or the glint of light on metal, or the sheen of

REPRESENTATION

lovely fabrics. Out of the complex of interests and appeals which an object offers, what is the *truth* of the object? The truth of nature resides not in the accidents of surface but in the essential relations, of which the surface is the manifestation. A birch tree and an apple tree are growing side by side. Their roots strike down into the same soil, their branches are warmed by the same sun, wet by the same rains, and swept by the same winds. The birch tree is always lithe and gracious and feminine; the apple tree is always bent and sternly gnarled like the hand of an old man. The life-force which impels the tree to growth is distinctive to each kind. Within all natural objects, then, a crystal, a tree, a man, there is a shaping principle which determines their essential form. But no two individual apple trees are precisely alike; from the essential form of the tree there are divergences in the single manifestations. Though subject to accident and variation, however, every tree exhibits a characteristic, inviolate *tendency*, and remains true to the inner life-principle of its being.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

The "truth" of the apple tree is this distinctive, essential form, by virtue of which it is an apple tree and not some other kind, the form which underlies and allows for all individual variations. What the painter renders on his canvas is not the superficial accidents of some single tree, but by means of that, he seeks to image forth in color and form the tendency of all trees. The truth of an object presents itself to the imagination as design, for this organic, shaping principle of things, expressed in colored myriad forms throughout the endless pageantry of nature, is apprehended by the spirit of man as a harmony; and in the experience of the artist truth identifies itself with beauty.

The distinction between the accidental surface of things and the significance that may be drawn out of them is exemplified by the difference between accuracy and truth in representation. Accurate drawing is the faithful record of the facts of appearance as offered to the eye. Truth of drawing is the rendering in visible terms of the meaning and spirit of the object, the form which the object takes

REPRESENTATION

not simply for the eye but for the mind. A pencil sketch by Millet shows a man carrying in each hand a pail of water. The arms are drawn inaccurately, in that they are made too long. What Millet wanted to express, however, was not the physical shape of the arms, but the feeling of the burden under which the man was bending; and by lengthening the arms he has succeeded in conveying, as mere accuracy could not express it, the sensation of weight and muscular strain. In Hals' picture of the "Jester" the left hand is sketched in with a few swift strokes of the brush. But so, it "keeps its place" in relation to the whole; and it is more nearly right than if it had been made the centre of attention and had been drawn with the most meticulous precision. The hand is not accurate, but it is true. Similarly, size is an affair not of physical extent but of proportion. A figure six inches high may convey the same value as a figure six feet high, if the same proportions are observed. A statue is the presentation, not of the human body, but of the human form, and more than that,

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

of what the form expresses. When I am talking with my friend I am aware of his physical presence detaching itself from the background of the room in which we are. But I feel in him something more. And that something more goes behind the details of his physical aspect. His eyes might be blue instead of brown, his nose crooked rather than straight; he might be maimed and disfigured by some mishap. These accidents would not change for me what is the reality. My friend is not his body, though it is by his body that he exists; the reality of my friend is what he essentially is, what he is of the spirit. A photograph of a man registers certain facts of his appearance at that moment. The eye and the mind of the artist discern the truth which underlies the surface; the artist feels his sitter not as a face and a figure, a mere body, but as a personality; and the portrait expresses a man.

As grasped by our finite minds, there are partial truths and degrees of truth. There are, for example, the facts of outer appearance, modified in our reception of them by

REPRESENTATION

what we know as distinct from what we really see. Thus a tree against the background of hill or sky seems to have a greater projection and relief than is actually presented to the eye, because we *know* the tree is round. Manet's "Girl with a Parrot," which appears to the ordinary man to be too flat, is more true to reality than any portrait that "seems to come out of its frame." Habitually in our observation of objects about us, we note only so much as serves our practical ends; and this is the most superficial, least essential aspect. Projection is a partial truth, and to it many painters sacrifice other and higher truths. Manet, recovering the "innocence of the eye" and faithful to it, has penetrated the secrets and won the truth of light. Botticelli saw the world as sonorous undulations of exquisite line; and his subtly implicated, evanescent patterns of line movement, "incorrect" as they may be superficially in drawing, caress the eye as music finds and satisfies the soul. When such is his power over us, it is difficult to say that Botticelli had not some measure of the truth. The world of the Ve-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

netians sang full-sounding harmonies of glorious color. Velasquez saw everything laved around with a flood of silver quiet atmosphere. All in their own way have found and shown to us a truth.

To render what he has seen and felt in the essence and meaning of it, the artist seeks to disengage the shaping principle of the particular aspect of truth, which has impressed him, from all accidents in its manifestation. To make this dominant character salient beyond irrelevant circumstance, art works by selection. Art is necessarily a compromise. It isolates some elements and sacrifices others; but it is none the less true on that account. The mere material of the object is more or less fixed, but the relations which the object embodies are capable of many combinations and adjustments, according to the mind and temperament of the individual artist who is moved by it. All art is in a certain sense abstraction; all art in a measure idealizes. It is abstraction in the sense that it presents the intrinsic and distinctive qualities of things, purged of accident.

REPRESENTATION

Art does not compete with nature ; it is a statement of the spirit and intention of nature in the artist's own terms. The test of the work is not apparent and superficial likeness, but truth. Art idealizes in the measure that it disengages the truth. In this aspect of it the work is ideal as distinct from merely actual. There is a practice in art which draws its standard of beauty, its ideal, not from nature but from other art, and which seeks to "improve nature" by the combination of arbitrarily chosen elements and by the modification of natural truth to fit a preconceived formula. The Eclectics of Bologna, in the seventeenth century, sought to combine Raphael's perfection of drawing and composition, Michelangelo's sublimity and his mastery of the figure, and Correggio's sweet sentiment and his supremacy in the rendering of light and shade, fondly supposing thus that the sum of excellent parts is equivalent to an excellence of the whole. This is false idealism. The Greeks carried their research for certain truths of the human form to the point of perfection and com-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

plete realization. The truth of the Greeks was mistaken by the pseudo-classicists and misapplied. Thus Delacroix exclaimed ironically, "In order to present an ideal head of a negro, our teachers make him resemble as far as possible the profile of Antinöus, and then say, 'We have done our utmost; if, nevertheless, we fail to make the negro beautiful, then we ought not to introduce into our pictures such a freak of nature, the squat nose and thick lips, which are so unendurable to the eyes.' " True idealism treats everything after its own kind, making it more intensely itself than it is in the play of nature; the athlete is more heroically an athlete, the negro more vividly a negro. True idealism seeks to express the tendency by virtue of which an object is what it is. The abstraction which art effects is not an unreality but a higher reality. It is not the mere type, that art presents, for the type as such does not exist in nature. The individual is not lost but affirmed by this reference to the inner principle of its being. A good portrait has in it an element of caricature; the

REPRESENTATION

difference between portraiture and caricature is the difference between emphasis and exaggeration. Art is not the falsification of nature, but the fuller realization of it. It is the interpretation of nature's truth, the translation of it, divined by the artist, into simpler terms to be read and understood by those of less original insight. The deeper the penetration into the life-force and shaping principle of nature, the greater is the measure of truth.

In representative art the truth of nature is the work's objective base. What the artist finally expresses is the relation of the object to his own experience. A work of art is the statement of the artist's insight into nature, moulded and suffused by the emotion attending his perception. Of the object, he uses that aspect and that degree of truth which serve him for the expression of his feeling toward it. What is called "realism" is one order of truth, one way of seeing. "Impressionism" is another order of truth. "Idealism" is still another. But all three elements blend in varying proportion in any

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

work. Even the realist, who "paints what he sees," has his ideal, which is the effect he sets himself to produce by his picture, and he paints according to his impression. He renders not the object itself but his mental image of it; and that image is the result of his way of seeing and feeling, his habit of mind, his interest, and his store of memories. The idealist must base his work upon some kind of reality, or it is a monstrosity; he is obliged to refer to the external world for his symbols. The impressionist, who concerns himself with the play of light over surfaces in nature, is seeking for truth, and he cares to paint at all because that play of light, seemingly so momentary and so merely sensuous, has a value for his spirit of which he may or may not be wholly conscious; and these shifting effects are the realization of his ideal. Unwitting at the moment of contact itself of the significance that afterwards is to flow articulately from his work, the artist, in the presence of his object, knows only that he is impelled to render it. As faithfully as possible he tries to record what he sees, conscious

REPRESENTATION

simply that what he sees gives him delight. His vision wakens his feeling, and then by reaction his feeling determines his vision, controlling and directing his selection of the details of aspect. When Velasquez, engaged on a portrait of the king, saw the maids of honor graciously attending on the little princess, he did not set about producing a *picture*, as an end in itself. In the relation of these figures to one another and to the background of the deep and high-vaulted chamber in which they were standing, each object and plane of distance receiving its just amount of light and fusing in the unity of total impression, were revealed to him the wonder and the mystery of nature's magic of light. This is what he tried to render. His revelation of natural truth, wrung from nature's inmost latencies and shown to us triumphantly, becomes a thing of beauty.

So the differences among the various "schools" in art are after all largely differences of emphasis. The choice of subject or motive, the angle from which it is viewed, and the method of handling, all are deter-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

mined by the artist's kind of interest; and that interest results from what the man is essentially by inheritance and individual character, and what he is moulded into by environment, training, and experience. It may happen that the external object imposes itself in its integrity upon the artist's mind and temperament, and he tries to express it, colored inevitably by his feeling toward it, in all faithfulness to the fact as he sees it. Millet said, "I should never paint anything that was not the result of an impression received from the aspect of nature, whether in landscape or figures." Millet painted what he saw, but he painted it as only he saw it. Or again it happens that an artist imposes his feeling upon nature. Thus Burne-Jones said, "I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be—in a light better than any that ever shone—in a land no one can define or remember, only desire." Whether true to nature or true to the creative inner vision, the work of both men embodies truth. Sometimes an artist effaces entirely his own individuality, as in

REPRESENTATION

Greek sculpture and Gothic architecture, and the mere name of the creator does not signify. George Frederick Watts is reported to have said, "If I were asked to choose whether I would like to do something good, as the world judges popular art, and receive personally great credit for it, or, as an alternative, to produce something which should rank with the very best, taking a place with the art of Pheidias or Titian, with the highest poetry and the most elevating music, and remain unknown as the perpetrator of the work, I should choose the latter." Sidney Lanier wrote, "It is of little consequence whether *I* fail; the *I* in the matter is small business. . . . Let my name perish,—the poetry is good poetry and the music is good music, and beauty dieth not, and the heart that needs it will find it." Or on the contrary, a work may bear dominantly, even aggressively, the impress of the distinctive individuality of its creator, as with Carlyle's prose and Browning's poetry. Whistler seems at times to delight less in the beauty of his subject than in the exercise of his own power

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

of refinement. Where another man's art is personal, as with Velasquez or Frans Hals, Whistler's art becomes egotistical. He does not say, "Lo, how mysterious is this dusk river-side, how tenderly serene this mother, how wistful and mighty is this prophet-seer!" He exclaims rather, "Note how subtly I, Whistler, have seen. Rejoice with me in my powers of vision and of execution." There is no single method of seeing, no one formula of expression and handling. The truth both of nature and of art is great and infinitely various. For art, like nature, is organic, allowing for endless modifications, while remaining true to the inner principle of its being.

The judgment of truth is a delicate business. To test the truth of a work of art by reference to the truth of nature is to presuppose that our power of perception is equal to the artist's power, and that our knowledge of the object represented is equal to his knowledge of it. The ordinary man's habitual contact with the world is practical, and his knowledge of natural fact, based upon the

REPRESENTATION

most superficial aspect of it and used for practical purposes, tends to falsify his vision. The artist's contact with the world, in his capacity as artist, is one of feeling; he values life, not for its material rewards and satisfactions, but for what it brings to him of emotional experience. The ordinary man uses nature for his own workaday ends. The artist loves nature, and through his love he understands her. His knowledge of natural fact, instead of falsifying his vision, reinforces it. He studies the workings of nature's laws as manifested in concrete phenomena around him, — the movement of storms, the growth of trees, the effects of light, — penetrating their inmost secrets, that he may make them more efficient instruments of expression. He uses his understanding of anatomy, of earth-structure, of the laws of color, as the means to a fuller and juster interpretation. As he receives the truth of nature with reverence and joy, so he transmutes truth into beauty.

An artist's interest in the truth of nature is not the scientist's interest, an intellectual concern with knowledge for the sake of

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

knowledge. The artist receives nature's revelation of herself with emotion. The deeper he penetrates into her hidden ways, the greater becomes her power to stir him. The artist values his "subject," therefore, as the stimulus of emotion and as the symbol by means of which he expresses his emotion and communicates it. The value of the subject to the appreciator, however, is not immediately clear. It is not easy for us to receive the subject purely as the artist shows it to us and independently of our own knowledge of it. About it already gather innumerable associations, physical, practical, intellectual, sentimental, and emotional, all of them or any of them, which result from our previous contact with it in actual life. Here is a portrait of Carlyle. I cannot help regarding the picture first of all from the point of view of its likeness to the original. This is a person with whom I am acquainted, an individual, by name Carlyle. And my reaction on the picture is determined, not by what the artist has to say about a great personality interpreted through the medium of color and form, but

REPRESENTATION

by what I already know about Carlyle. Or here a painting shows me a landscape with which I am familiar. Then instead of trying to discover in the picture what the artist has seen in the landscape and felt in its presence, letting it speak to me in its own language, I allow my thoughts to wander from the canvas, and I enjoy the landscape in terms of my own knowledge and remembrance of it. The artist's work becomes simply a point of departure, whereas it should be not only the beginning but also the end and fulfillment of the complete experience. What is, then, we may ask, the relation of the fact of the subject to the beauty and final message of the work?

The pleasure which attends the recognition of the subject is a legitimate element in our enjoyment of art. But the work should yield a delight beyond our original delight in the subject as it exists in nature. The significance of a work of representative art depends not upon the subject in and of itself, but upon what the artist has to say about it. A rose may be made to reveal the cosmos; a moun-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

tain range or cloud-swept spaces of the upper air may be niggled into meanness. The ugly in practical life may be transfigured by the artist's touch into supreme beauty. "*Il faut pouvoir faire servir le trivial à l'expression du sublime, c'est là la vraie force,*" said one who was able to invest a humble figure with august dignity. Millet's peasants reveal more of godlike majesty than all the array of personages in the pantheon of post-Raphaelite Italy and the classic school of France. Upon his subject the artist bases that harmony of relations which constitutes the beauty and significance of his work. Brought thus into a harmony, the object represented is made more vivid, more intensely itself, than it is in nature, with the result that we receive from the representation a heightened sense of reality and of extended personality. The importance of the subject, therefore, is measured by the opportunity it affords the artist, and with him his appreciators, to share in the beauty of nature and life. A picture should not "stand out" from its frame, but should go back into it, reaching even into infinity.

REPRESENTATION

Our own associations attaching to the subject lose themselves as they blend with the artist's revelation of the fuller beauty of his object; and finally all becomes merged in the emotional experience.

Eliminating the transient and accidental, a work of art presents the essential and eternal. Art appeals not to the intellect and the reason, but to the imagination and the emotions. The single work, therefore, is concrete and immediate. But universal in its scope, it transcends the particularities of limited place and individual name. We must distinguish between the abstractly typical and the universal. The representative artist does not conceive an abstraction and then seek to find a symbol for it. That is the method of allegory, where spring, for example, is figured as a young woman scattering flowers. Allegory is decorative rather than representative in intention. The artist receives his inspiration and stimulus from some actual concrete bit of nature, a woodland wrapt in tender mists of green, a meadow gold and softly white with blossoms, a shimmering gauze of sun-

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

touched air, moist and vibrating, enfolding it. That is what he paints. But he paints it so that it is spring, and instinct with the spirit of all springs. Michelangelo does not intellectually conceive youth and then carve a statue. Some boy has revealed to him the beauty of his young strength, and the sculptor moves to immediate expression. He calls his statue David, but the white form radiates the rhythm and glory of all youth. And as we realize youth in ourselves, more poignantly, more abundantly, the mere name of the boy does not matter. The fact that the portrait shows us Carlyle is an incident. Carlyle is the "subject" of the picture, but its meaning is the twilight of a mighty, indomitable mind, made visible and communicable. His work is done; the hour of quiet is given, and he finds rest. Into this moment, eternal in its significance, into this mood, universal in its appeal, we enter, to realize it in ourselves. The subject of picture or statue is but the means; the end is life. Objective fact is transmuted into living truth. Art is the manifestation of a higher reality than we alone have

REPRESENTATION

been able to know. It begins with the particular and then transcends it, admitting us to share in the beauty of the world, the cosmic harmony of universal experience.

X

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

ART starts from life and in the end comes back to it. Art is born out of the stirring of the artist's spirit in response to his need of expression, and it reaches its fulfillment in the spirit of the appreciator as it answers his need of wider and deeper experience. Midway on its course from spirit to spirit it traverses devious paths. The emotion out of which art springs and of which it is the expression is controlled and directed by the shaping force of mind, and it embodies itself in material form. This material form, by virtue of its qualities, has the power to delight our senses; the skill which went into the fashioning of it, so far as we can recognize the processes of execution, gives us pleasure; the harmony which the work of art must manifest satisfies the mind and makes it possible for us to link the emotion with our own experience.

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

These paths which a work of art traverses in its course from its origin to its fulfillment I have tried to follow in their ramifications, and I have tried to trace them to their issue in appreciation. Some lovers of art may linger on the way and rest content with the distance they have come, without pressing forward to the end. A work of art is complex in its appeal; and it is possible to stop with one or another of its elements. Thus we may receive the work intellectually, recognizing its subject, and turning the artist's emotion into our thought and translating it from his medium of color and form or sound into our own medium of words. Here is a portrait of Carlyle; and Carlyle we *know* as an author and as a man. This landscape is from the Palisades, where we have roamed in leisure hours. Before us is a statue of Zeus, whom our classical reading has made a reality to us. This symphony gathers about a day in the country, suggesting an incident in our own experience of which we have pleasant remembrances. Intellectually, also, we enjoy the evidence of the artist's skill which the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

work exhibits. Or we may pass beyond the simple exercise of the intellect, and with a refinement of perception we may take a sensuous delight in the qualities of the material in which the work is embodied. This portrait is a subtle harmony of color and exquisite adjustment of line and mass. The luminous night which enwraps the Palisades is a solemn mighty chord. The white rhythm of this statue caresses the eye that follows it. This symphony is an intricate and wonderful wave-pattern upon a sea of billowing sound in which the listener immerses himself voluptuously. The essential significance of a work of art is not to be received apart from its form, but the form is more than merely sensuous in its appeal. Finally, therefore, the color and the composition of the portrait are but the point of meeting where we touch in energizing contact a powerful personality. Our spirit goes out into the night of these Palisades and dilates into immensity. This statue is Olympian majesty made visible, and in its presence we feel that we too are august. The symphony is a resolution of the struggle

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

of our own tangled lives, a purification, and the experience of joy.

Art is the expression of experience, whether the experience enacts itself within the spirit of the artist or derives from his contact with the external world. So by the same token, art is finally to be received as experience. The ultimate meaning of a work of art to the appreciator is what it awakens in him of emotion. It is the artist's business, by the manipulation of his materials and his elements, by the choice of motive and the rendering, by the note and pitch of his color, the ordering of his line, the disposition of his masses, to compel the direction of the emotion ; he must not allow the solemnity and awe with which his night invests the Palisades to be mistaken by the beholder for terror or for mere obscurity. But the quality and the intensity of the emotion depend upon the temper of the appreciator's sensibilities and the depth and range of his experience of life. Art is not fixed and invariable in its effect. "Vanity Fair" is a great novel. One man may read it for

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

the sake of the story, and in his amusement and interest in following the succession of incident, he may for a while forget himself. A possible use to put one's reading to ; yet for that man the book is not art. Another may be entertained by the spectacle of the persons as they exhibit themselves in Thackeray's pages, much as he might stop a moment on the curbstone and watch a group of children at play in the street. Here he is a looker-on, holding himself aloof ; and for him, again, the book is not art. Still a third may find in "Vanity Fair" a record of the customs and manners of English people at the beginning of the nineteenth century ; and he adds this much to his stock of information. Still for him the book is not art. Not one of the three has touched in vital contact the essential meaning of "Vanity Fair." But the man who sees in the incidents of the book a situation possible in his own life, who identifies himself with the personages and acts out with them their adventures, who feels that he actually knows Rawdon Crawley and Becky Sharp, Jo Sed-

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

ley, Dobbin, and Amelia, and understands their character and personality better here than in the actual world about him by force of Thackeray's greater insight and power of portraiture, who sees in English manners here represented the interpretation of his own surroundings, so that as a result of it all, his own experience becomes richer for his having lived out the life of the fictitious persons, his own acquaintances have revealed themselves more fully, his own life becomes more intelligible,—for him at last the book is a work of art. So any work may be a mirror which simply reflects the world as we know it ; it may be a point of departure, from which tangentially we construct an experience of our own : it is truly art only in the degree that it is revelation.

A work of art, therefore, is to be received by the individual appreciator as an added emotional experience. It appeals to him at all because in some way it relates itself to his own life ; and its value to him is determined by the measure in which it carries him out into wider ranges of feeling. There

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

are works whose absolute greatness he recognizes but yet which do not happen at the moment to find him. Constable comes to him as immensely satisfying; Turner, though an object of great intellectual interest, leaves him cold. He knows Velasquez to be supreme among painters, but he turns away to stand before Frans Hals, whose quick, sure strokes call such very human beings into actuality and rouse his spirit to the fullest response. Why is it that of two works of equal depth of insight into life, of equal scope of feeling, of the same excellence of technical accomplishment, one has an appeal and a message for him and not the other? What is the bridge of transition between the work and the spirit of the appreciator by which the subtle connection is established?

It comes back to a matter of harmony. Experience presents itself to us in fragments; and in so far as the parts are scattering and unrelated, it is not easy for us to guess the purpose of our being here. But so soon as details, which by virtue of some selecting principle are re-

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

lated to one another, gather themselves into a whole, chaos is resolved into order, and this whole becomes significant, intelligible, and beautiful. Instinctively we are seeking, each in his own way, to bring the fragments of experience into order ; and that order stands to each of us for what we are, for our individual personality, the self. We define thus our selecting principle, by which we receive some incidents of experience as related to our development and we reject others as not related to it. Thus the individual life achieves its integrity, its unity and significance. This, too, is the process of art. A landscape in nature is capable of a various interpretation. By bringing its details into order and unity, the artist creates its beauty. His perception of the harmony which his imagination compels out of the landscape is attended with emotion, and the emotion flows outward to expression in a form which is itself harmonious. This form is a work of art. Art, therefore, is the harmonizing of experience. Appreciation is an act of fusion and identification. In spirit we *become* the thing presented by the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

work of art and we merge with it in a larger unity. The individual harmony which a work of art manifests becomes significant to us as we can make it an harmonious part of our own experience and as it carries us in the direction of our development.

But how to determine, each man for himself, what is the direction of our development? A life becomes significant to itself so soon as it is conscious of its purpose, and it becomes harmonious as it makes all the details of experience subserve that purpose. The purpose of the individual life, so far as we can guess it, seems to be that the life shall be as complete as possible, that it shall fulfill itself and provide through its offspring for its continuance. It is true that no life is isolated ; as every atom throughout the universe is bound to every other atom by subtlest filaments of influence, so each human life stands related to all other lives. But the man best pays his debt of service to others who makes the most of that which is given him to work with ; and that is his own personality. We must begin at the centre and work outwards. My con-

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

cern is with my own justice. If I worry because my friend or another is not just, I not only do not make him more just, but I also fail of the highest justice I can achieve, which is my own. We must be true to ourselves. We help one another not by precept but by *being*; and what we are communicates itself. As physical life propagates and thus continues itself, so personality is transmitted in unconscious innumerable ways. The step and carriage of the body, the glance of the eye, the work of our hands, our silences no less than our speech, all express what we are. As everything follows upon what we are, so our responsibility is to *be*, to be ourselves completely, perfectly.

A tender shoot pushes its way out of the soil into light and air, and with the years it grows into a tree. The tree bears fruit, which contains the seed of new manifestations of itself. The fruit falls to the ground and rots, providing thus the aliment for the seed out of which other trees are to spring. From seed to seed the life of the tree is a cycle, without beginning and without end. At no one point

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

in the cycle can we say, Here is the purpose of the tree. Incidentally the tree may minister to the needs and comfort and pleasure of man. The tree delights him to look upon it; its branches shade him from the noonday sun; its trunk and limbs can be hewn down and turned to heat and shelter; its fruit is good to eat. The primary purpose of the fruit, however, is not to furnish food to man, but to provide the envelope for the transmission of its seed and the continuance of its own life. Seen in its cosmic bearing and scope, the purpose of the tree is to be a tree, as fit, as strong, as beautiful, as complete, as tree-like, as it can be. The leaf precedes the flower and may be thought on that account to be inferior to it in the scale of development. If a leaf pines and withers in regret that it is not a flower, it not only does not become a flower, but it fails of being a good leaf. Everything in its place and after its own kind. In so far as it is perfectly itself, a leaf, a blossom, a tree, a man, does it contribute to the well-being of others. Man has subdued all things under his feet and turned them to

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

his own uses. By force of mind he is the strongest creature, but it is not to be inferred that he is therefore the aim and end of all creation. Like everything else, he has his place; like everything else he has the right to live his own life, triumphing over the weaker and in his turn going down before a mightier when the mightier shall come; like everything else he is but a part in the universal whole. Only a part; but as we recognize our relation to other parts and through them our connection with the whole, our sense of the value of the individual life becomes infinitely extended. We must get into the rhythm, keeping step with the beat of the universal life and finding there our place, our destiny, the meaning of our being here, and joy. The goods which men set before themselves as an end are but by-products after all. If we pursue happiness we overtake it not. If we do what our hands find to do, devotedly and with our might, then, some day, if we happen to stop and make question of it, we discover that happiness is already there, in us, with us, and around us. The aim of a man's life in the

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

world, as it would seem, is to be perfectly a man, and his end is to fulfill himself; as part of this fulfillment of himself, he provides for the continuance of his life in other lives, and transmitting his character and influence, he enriches other lives because of what he is. The purpose of seeing is that we may see more, and the eye is ever striving to increase its power; the health of the eye is growth. The purpose of life is more life, individual in the measure that it lies within a man's power to develop it, but cosmic in its sources and its influence.

As the harmony which a work of art presents finds a place in that harmony of experience and outward-reaching desire which constitutes our personality, art becomes for us an entrance into more life. In the large, art is a means of development. But as any work embraces diverse elements and is capable of a various appeal, it may be asked in what sense the appreciation of art is related to education and culture. Before we can answer the question intelligently, we must know what we mean by our terms. By many

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

people education is regarded as they regard any material possession, to be classed with fashionable clothes, a fine house, a carriage and pair, or touring-car, or steam yacht, as the credential and card of entrée to what is called good society. Culture is a kind of ornamental furniture, maintained to impress visitors. Of course we ourselves do not think so, but we know people who do. Nor do we believe — as some believe — that education is simply a means of gaining a more considerable livelihood. It is pathetic to see young men in college struggling in desperate, uncomplaining sacrifice to obtain an education, and all the while mistaking the end of their effort. Not all the deeds of daring in a university course are enacted on the athletic field; the men I am thinking of do not have their pictures published in the newspapers, — the unrecorded heroisms of college life are very moving to those who know. But the tragedy I have in mind is this — for tragedy consists not in sacrifice itself but in needless and futile sacrifice — that some of these young men suppose there

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

is a magic virtue in education for its own sake, that it is the open-sesame to all the wealth and beauty of life. With insufficient ability to start with, they are preparing to be unfit professional men, when they might be excellent artisans. The knowledge of books is in no sense the whole story nor the only means of education. In devotion to some craft or in the intelligent conduct of some business they might find the true education, which is the conscious discipline of one's powers. The man who can do things, whether with his hands or with his brain, provided intelligence govern the exercise of hand and brain, and who finds happiness in his work because it is the expression of himself, is an educated man. The end of education is the building of personality, the making of human power, and its fruit is wisdom.

Wisdom, however, does not consist in the most extensive knowledge of facts. Oftentimes information overweights a man and snuffs out what personal force there might otherwise have been. On the futility of mere

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

learning there is abundant testimony. Walt Whitman, as we might expect from his passion for the vital and the human, has said: "You must not know too much and be too precise and scientific about birds and trees and flowers and watercraft. A certain free margin, perhaps ignorance, credulity, helps your enjoyment of these things and of the sentiment of feather'd, wooded, river or marine nature generally. I repeat it—don't want to know too exactly or the reasons why." Even Ruskin, whose learning was extensive and various, bears witness to the same effect. He notes "the diminution which my knowledge of the Alps had made in my impression of them, and the way in which investigation of strata and structure reduces all mountain sublimity to mere débris and wall-building." In the same spirit he planned an essay on the Uses of Ignorance. From the midst of his labors in Venice he wrote: "I am sure that people who work out subjects thoroughly are disagreeable wretches. One only feels as one should when one does n't know much about the matter." In other words, we are not to

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

let our knowledge come between us and our power to feel. In thus seeming to assail education I am not seeking to subvert or destroy; I want simply to adjust the emphasis. The really wise man is he who knows how to make life yield him its utmost of true satisfaction and furnish him the largest scope for the use of his powers and the expression of himself. In this sense a newsboy in the streets may be wiser than a university professor, in that one may be the master of his life and the other may be the servant of his information. Education should have for its end the training of capacities and powers, the discipline and control of the intelligence, the quickening of the sympathies, the development of the ability to live. No man is superior to his fellows because of the fact of his education. His education profits him only in so far as it makes him more of a man, more responsive because his own emotions have been more deeply stirred, more tolerant because his wider range has revealed more that is good, more generous to give of his own life and service because he has more generously received. It

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

is not what we know nor what we have that marks our worth, but what we are. No man, however fortunate and well-circumstanced he may be, can afford to thank God that he is not as other men are. In so far as his education tends to withdraw him from life and from contact with his fellows of whatever station, in so far as it fosters in him the consciousness of class, so far it is an evil. Education should lead us not to judge lives different from our own, but to try to understand and to appreciate. The educated man, above all others, should thank God that there are diversity of gifts and so many kinds of good.

Art is a means of culture, but art rightly understood and received. Art does not aim to teach. It may teach incidentally, tangentially to its circle, but instruction, either intellectual or ethical, is not its purpose. It fulfills itself in the spirit of the appreciator as it enables him in its presence to become something that otherwise he had not been. It is not enough to be told things; we must make trial of them and live them out in our own experience before they become true for us.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

As appreciation is not knowledge but feeling, so we must live our art. It is well to have near us some work that we want to be *like*. We get its fullest message only as we identify ourselves with it. If we are willing to be thought ignorant and to live our lives as seems good to us, I believe it is better to go the whole way with a few things that can minister to us abundantly and so come to the end of them, than to touch in superficial contact a great many lesser works. The lesser works have their place; and so far as they can carry us beyond the point where we are, they can serve us. In a hurried touch-and-go, however, there is danger of scattering; whereas true appreciation takes time, for it is less an act than a whole attitude of mind. This is an age of handbooks and short cuts. But there is no substitute for life. If for one reason or another the opportunity to realize art in terms of life is not accorded us, it is better to accept the situation quite frankly and happily, and not try to cheat ourselves with the semblance. But if it is indeed the reality, then we may be content with the minutes of

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

experience, though we are denied the hours or the years. "The messages of great poems," says Whitman, "to each man and woman are, Come to us on equal terms ; only then can you understand us." The power of response must be in us, and that power is the fruit of experience. The only mystery of art is the mystery of all life itself. In nature the artist finds the manifestation of a larger self toward which he aspires, and this is what his work expresses. Alone with his spirit, he cries to us for that intimate mystic companionship which is appreciation, and our response gives back the echo of his cry. He reaches out across the distance to touch other and kindred spirits and draw them to himself. Says the poet, —

"Thou reader throbbest life and pride and love
the same as I,
Therefore for thee the following chants."

We appreciate the artist's work as in it we live again and doubly.

Thus art links itself with life. The message of art to the individual defines itself

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

according to his individual needs. Life rises with each man, to him a new opportunity and a new destiny. We create our own world; and life means to us what we are in ourselves. In art we are seeking to find ourselves expressed more fully. The works that we care for, if we consider it a moment, are the works we understand; and we understand them because they phrase for us our own experience. Life and the truth of life are relative. Truth is not in the object but in our relation to it. What is true for me may or may not be true for another. This much is true for me, namely, whatever tallies with my experience and reveals to me more of the underlying purpose of the universe. We are all, each in his own way, seeking the meaning of life; and that meaning is special and personal to the individual, each man deciding for himself. By selection here, by rejection there, we are trying to work toward harmony. The details of life become increasingly complex with the years, but living grows simpler because we gradually fix a selecting and unifying principle. When

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

we have truly found ourselves, we come to feel that the external incidents do not signify ; which chance happens, whether this or that, is indifferent. It is the spirit in which the life is lived that determines its quality and value. The perception of purpose in the parts brings them into order and gives them meaning. A man's life is an expanding circle, the circumference of which is drawn around an order or interplay and adjustment of part with part. Whatever lies without the circle does not pertain to the individual — as yet. So soon as any experience reveals its meaning to us and we feel that it takes its place in our life, then it belongs to us. Whatever serves to bring details, before scattering and unrelated, into order, is for that moment true. Art has a message for us as it tallies with what we already know about life ; and, quickening our perceptions, disclosing depths of feeling, it carries us into new ranges of experience.

In this attitude toward life lies the justice of the personal estimate. The individual is finally his own authority. To find truth

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

we return upon our own consciousness, and we seek thus to define our "original relation" to the universal order. So as one stands before the works of the Italian painters and sculptors, for example, in the endeavor rightly to appreciate what they have achieved, one may ask: How much of life has this artist to express to me, of life as I know it or can know it? Has the painter through these forms, however crude or however accomplished, uttered what he genuinely and for himself thought and felt? The measure of these pictures for me is the degree of reality, of vital feeling, which they transmit. Whether it be spring or divine maternity or the beauty of a pagan idea, which Botticelli renders, the same power is there, the same sense of gracious life. Whether it be Credi's naïve womanhood, or Titian's abounding, glorious women and calm and forceful men, or Della Robbia's joyous children and Donatello's sprites, the same great meaning is expressed, the same appreciation of the goodness and beauty of all life. This beauty is for me, here, to-day. In the experi-

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

ence of a man who thinks and feels, there is a time when his imagination turns toward the past. At the moment, as the world closes in about him, his spirit, dulled by the attrition of daily use and wont, is unable to discern the beauty and significance of the present life around him. For a time his imagination finds abundant nourishment in the mighty past. Many spirits are content there to remain. But life is of the present. To live greatly is to live now, inspired by the past, corrected and encouraged by it, impelled by "forward-looking thoughts" and providing for the future, but living in to-day. Life is neither remembrance nor anticipation, neither regret nor deferment, but present realization. Often one feels in a gallery that the people are more significant than the pictures. Two lovers furtively holding hands and stopping before a canvas to press closer together, shoulder to shoulder ; a young girl erect and firm, conscious of her young womanhood and rejoicing in it, radiating youth and life ; an old man, whose years are behind him yet whose interest reveals his

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

eager welcome of new experience, unconsciously rebuking the jaded and indifferent: here is reality. Before it the pictures seem to recede and become dimmed. Our appreciation of these things makes the significance of it all. Only in so far as art can communicate this sensation, this same impression of the beauty and present reality of life, has it a meaning for us. The painter must have registered his appreciation of immediate reality and must impart that to us until it becomes, heightened and intensified, our own. The secret of successful living lies in compelling the details of our surroundings to our own ends. Michelangelo lived his life; Leonardo lived his; neither could be the other. A man must paint the life that he knows, the experience into which he enters. So we must live our lives immediately and newly. We have penetrated the ultimate mystery of art when we realize the inseparable oneness of art with life.

Art is a call to fuller living. Its real service is to increase our capacity for experience. The pictures, the music, the books, which

THE PERSONAL ESTIMATE

profit us are those which, when we have done with them, make us feel that we have lived by just so much. Often we purchase experience with enthusiasm ; we become wise at the expense of our power to enjoy. What we need in relation to art is not more knowledge but greater capability of feeling, not the acquisition of more facts but the increased power to interpret facts and to apply them to life. In appreciation it is not what we know about a work of art, it is not even what we actually see before us, that constitutes its significance, but what in its presence we are able to feel. The paradox that nature imitates art has in it this much of truth, that art is the revelation of the possibilities of life, and we try to make these possibilities actual in our own experience. Art is not an escape from life and a refuge ; it is a challenge and reënforcement. Its action is not to make us less conscious but more ; in it we are not to lose ourselves but to find ourselves more truly and more fully. Its effect is to help us to a larger and juster appreciation of the beauty and worth of nature and of life.

THE GATE OF APPRECIATION

Art is within the range of every man who holds himself open to its appeal. But art is not the final thing. It is a means to an end; its end is personality. There are exalted moments in the experience of us all which we feel to be finer than any art. Then we do not need to turn to painting, music, literature, for our satisfaction. We are living. Art is aid and inspiration, but its fulfillment and end is life.

“We live,” says Wordsworth, “by admiration, hope, and love.” Admiration is wonder and worship, a sense of the mystery and the beauty of life as we know it now, and thankfulness for it, and joy. Hope is the vision of things to be. And love is the supreme enfolding unity that makes all one. Art is life at its best, but life is the greatest of the arts, — life harmonious, deep in feeling, big in sympathy, the life that is appreciation, responsiveness, and love.

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
U . S . A

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET**

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

N
7475
N68
1907
C.1
ROBA

